

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CALVIN'S ANTHROPOLOGY  
FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of  
The School of Theology at Claremont  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
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May, 1982

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to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of  
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my guidance committee for their consistent encouragement, guidance and stimulation given to me in the process of preparing this study on Calvin and counseling. Their involvement in this project not only resulted in a better dissertation but also contributed to my development as a person, both in emotional and intellectual quality.

I cannot fail to mention the patience and encouragement of my wife, Ardyth, and my children, Angela and Derek. Long hours spent in study are often hours taken from them. They were all good enough to make this dissertation a family project rather than only a personal goal of my own.

My parents also deserve mention here since without their faith in me I would undoubtedly have given up a life of scholarship years ago. Even more important is the faith in God they communicated to me throughout my life. Their commitment to Jesus Christ has become my commitment and it is out of this commitment that this dissertation has been written.



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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation is concerned with demonstrating that the anthropology of a classical theological system may still be stimulating and applicable when used to address issues of contemporary significance to the field of pastoral counseling. The format used to demonstrate the above thesis can be summarized by a brief description of the six chapters.

Chapter one uses the contributions of contemporary writers in the fields of theology and counseling to demonstrate that there is a call for the development and integration of a classical theological understanding of anthropology as it relates to counseling issues. Calvin's anthropology, as representative of a classical system, is related to our society and hypothesized as relevant in relationship to three particular areas: 1) freedom and authority, 2) narcissism, and 3) feminism.

Chapter two outlines Calvin's understanding of anthropology as presented by him through his writings. This is a basis for further development, comparison, and critique.

Chapter three details a study of the actual ministry of Calvin to learn how his anthropology affected his ministry. A more realistic picture of Calvin as pastor is

given and the problems between his written and working theology delineated.

Chapter four uses the three contemporary issues presented in chapter one to critique Calvin's formulations and outline directions in which his thought may be developed. Erich Fromm is primarily used in the discussion of freedom and authority, Abraham Maslow is primarily used in the discussion of narcissism, and a variety of feminist resources structured around the Biblical exegetical work of Georgia Harkness is used in relationship to the women's movement.

Chapter five presents two case studies demonstrating how the commitment to a theological framework can affect the approach and relationship of a counselor to a counselee in order to bring about positive changes and growth in a client both in social and religious spheres.

Chapter six gives a summary of this study and the conclusions that may be drawn. The implications of each conclusion are also presented since they are significant in pointing out further issues for study.

## Chapter I

### THE PRESENT CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

There is a unique challenge to pastoral counselors in their relationship to church members and to society in general. The challenge arises because of the relationship of pastoral counseling to the church and to the theology of the church. This relationship demands that the pastoral counseling not only take seriously the ultimate nature of questions with which people may be troubled, but that the pastoral counselor also practice counseling in a manner that leads people to relevant resolutions to, or at least understandings of, their questions. These questions may focus on issues such as the being and nature of God, the existence of evil and suffering, and the sharing of the Holy Spirit. The presenting problems of a counselee may not be stated in terms of the above issues, but if only the presenting problem is dealt with, the counselee may feel betrayed by a pastoral counselor who did not bring out the deeper, more difficult questions. The challenge for pastoral counselors is, therefore, to counsel while using the full depth of religious theological thought combined with the best and most salogenic counseling method possible. The demand for pastoral counselors is that they be relevant by being practitioners clearly in touch with the roots of their own

discipline.

The problem of relevancy is, therefore, not one of ignoring the sufferings of people. Even cursory observation of pastoral counseling shows that it tries to address the relevant issues of pain and problems in people's lives.<sup>1</sup> The call for relevancy is at the more basic level that has been presented. Work at this level is beginning to be done by pastoral counselors in their use of the growth concept. Clinebell has recognized that pastoral counseling must produce and do more than just alleviate presently experienced difficulties. Many systems of therapy and counseling are very skilled in temporary alleviation of difficulties, but far fewer have begun to look toward the production of growth in clients. The shift has begun and has proved to be very effective and beneficial for pastoral counseling. Some of this effective work is seen in Clinebell:

Gradually, over the last ten years or so, my counseling and caring ministry has shifted from a diagnostic, treatment approach (a pathology model) to a human development, positive-potentials approach (a growth model). I've changed from focusing on what's wrong with a person or relationship and now I place greater emphasis on what's right and what's possible; as this change has taken place better results have occurred in my ministry of counseling, teaching, and working with small groups. Furthermore, it has gradually become clear to me that the positive approach frees one in

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, the case studies and verbatims in books like: H. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) and W. Oglesby, Biblical Themes in Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980)

helping relationships to use more of the rich assets and resources which every church-related, religiously aware person has available.<sup>2</sup>

People respond positively to the assertion that they are valuable and have great potential. However this statement must be made within the context of addressing the ultimate issues of a person's life. These ultimate issues may be experienced differently by different people, but the answer to ultimate issues must always come from the Ultimate. Paul Johnson has written that, "The finite creature with infinite possibilities will hate and destroy himself unless he seeks beyond himself the answering response."<sup>3</sup> It is the Ultimate, the answering response, which people may seek to hear through the pastoral counselor.

Psychologists, while providing volumes of material and data collection from research, have recognized a need for an interpretive framework which does not arise naturally from their discipline.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>H. Clinebell, Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) 1.

<sup>3</sup>P. Johnson, Psychology of Religion (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945) 99.

<sup>4</sup>See for example: M. Cosgrove and J. Mallory, Mental Health: A Christian Approach (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977); and M. Cosgrove, The Essence of Human Nature (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977)

One psychologist, admitting overstatement but holding to his observation, wrote, "Psychology's efforts, while enlightening in many ways, are about as useful to the counselor in search of an absolute foundation as floating anchors are to a ship in stormy waters."<sup>5</sup> The question is of fundamental foundations and ultimate answers. Is there such provision available from the field of counseling? Shostrom finds that if there is hope, it is not to be found from the psychological side of counseling: "For years it has been clear that such hope has been missing in contemporary psychiatry and psychology."<sup>6</sup> Theology must come to the assistance of psychology with an address to issues of ultimacy and foundations; unfortunately, psychiatrists have not seen theologians concerned with counseling as providing enough needed input. Because of this silence of theology in years past it has been said that, ". . . psychiatry and psychology may well be on their way to replacing religion in America."<sup>7</sup> Clearly the general population has not let this be the case, as has been shown by the proliferation and importation of religions into American society.

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<sup>5</sup>L. Crabb, Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 27.

<sup>6</sup>E. Shostrom, Actualizing Therapy (San Diego: Edits, 1976) 2.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 63.

The populace, evidently, knew intuitively that practitioners in psychology and psychiatry did not have the necessary answers. The field of psychology, nevertheless, has tried to make up for the past negligence of theology. Jung noted this when writing about the lack of clear answers: "That is why we psychotherapists must occupy ourselves with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologian."<sup>8</sup> Theologians are more clearly recognizing their responsibilities to the field of counseling, and responses are now being formulated that are beneficial to all disciplines dealing with counseling. This study will seek to contribute a part of the theological response.

Where has theology been for the last few decades? It certainly has not been dead. Rather it has been learning from the disciplines of psychology and sociology. While theology has been an apt student, it has not, unfortunately, been an apt teacher. Possibly other disciplines were not ready to be taught. The relationship of psychology and theology has been described by Oden:

After two decades of bridge building however, it is finally dawning on me that the traffic is moving on the bridge only one way: from psychological speculations to rapt religious attentiveness. The conversation has been completely one-sided. Theology's listening to psychology has been far more accurate, empathic

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 125.



and attentive than has psychology's listening to theology.<sup>9</sup>

This active learning response of theology has prepared the discipline well to address the modern issues which are being faced by the counseling field. Because theology did not react to the findings of psychology in fear but learned from them, it is now emerging as a stronger discipline with more to offer than previously imagined by many people working in other disciplines.

This study will be one vehicle in the traffic of which Oden spoke that is going the other way on the bridge. It will look at the contribution that theology can make to the issues of our society that are experienced as crucial issues for a healthy society. This is, therefore, a study particularly relevant to those persons interested in pastoral care when it is defined as care done by "representative Christian persons" who are "healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns."<sup>10</sup> In addition to this definition we must include a category of nurturing growth in pastoral care as a response to the cries of our society. The address of theology to ultimate questions, therefore, becomes not only anti-pathological

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<sup>9</sup>T. Oden, Agenda for Theology (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979) 165.

<sup>10</sup>W. Clebsch and C. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (New York: Aronson, 1964) 4.

but, more importantly, pro-salugenic.

To speak of how theology addresses people through the discipline of pastoral counseling requires knowledge of how theology can be consciously used as a resource. Clinebell indicates the initial direction here.

Pastoral counseling must come of age in both theory and practice. It must find a new level of self-identity and maturity, by deepening its theological roots, broadening its methodology, and discovering its unique contribution to the helping of troubled humanity, reference to both its own heritage and the other helping disciplines.<sup>11</sup>

This study will be concerned with deepening the theological roots of pastoral care. It will do this through a rediscovering of the theology of classical Christianity. The representative used for this inquiry will be John Calvin, a theologian not often associated in people's minds with pastoral sensitivity. The study will also be concerned with understanding a part of the heritage of pastoral care that was left by Calvin and his work in Geneva.

For many a question of relevance may arise here. It stems, quite possibly, from an attitude that anything as old as Calvin's theology cannot be very applicable to our advanced society. This is an attitude of our society that has been noted by Oden.

I do not mean to ignore all the scientific and political achievements

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<sup>11</sup>H. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966) 16-17.

of the modern period but rather to point to one of our consistently worst habits as modern persons, the exaltation of the modo, the "just now," the most recent thing, as an unparalleled virtue.<sup>12</sup>

Once this tendency is clearly set forth, however, it is clear that it is an obvious fallacy of reasoning. It is perfectly possible that a classical theological system like Calvin's may give new and fresh insight into some of the problems and dynamics of our society when new thought forms and new information come in dialogue with it. This kind of response to classical systems is already being seen by Oden:

The postmodern person is looking for something beyond modernity [defined as the present infatuations], some source of meaning and value that transcends the assumptions of modernity. Neck deep in the quicksands of modernity, the postmodern mind is now struggling to set itself free. Some of these postmoderns have happened on classical Christianity and experienced themselves as having been suddenly lifted out of these quicksands onto firmer ground. . . . they have begun to discover that the orthodox core of classical Christianity constitutes a powerful, wideranging, viable critique of modern consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

This study will not demonstrate how Calvin's theology can set us free from some of the modern problems; rather, it will demonstrate only that his theology can indeed be useful in addressing modern problems. This may seem a subtle distinction, but it is necessary. If Calvin's theology were to be used as a tool, it would be only another tool among many tools. In this study Calvin's theo-

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<sup>12</sup>Oden, 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 49.

logy and later modifications of it will be examined as a possible framework in which counseling tools may be used. This will not limit inquiry but will give us a better way of interpreting the data of our inquiries as we study and counsel. By way of analogy, a blueprint is being formed for the field of pastoral counseling rather than another "hammer" or "saw". The formulation of this blueprint, however, is not seeking to radically alter some of the techniques which counseling has used in the past; rather, the blueprint is being built upon and compared to another (the blueprint of Calvin's work in Geneva) which has been proven to be successful and offers hope for a continuing address to contemporary society.

In order for a blueprint of a house to be useful, it must demonstrate that the constructed house will provide for the needs of a family. Likewise Calvin's theology, if used, must provide for the needs expressed in our society if it is to be useful. It is impossible to singularly address all of the needs that are expressed in any one age; however, some of the more relevant and overarching needs may be examined. In this study the needs which will be examined are the issues of equality, authority and freedom, and a more specific issue demonstrating aspects of both of these categories, the women's rights movement. Since the purpose of this study is to demonstrate the relevance of Calvin's theology as a framework, we will not attempt to resolve the issues brought forward. Rather, the issues will be

used as a critique of Calvin's theology in order that its use may have even greater relevance.

The call for an address to the issues of equality in modern society is noted by Oden as an issue raised even earlier by Kierkegaard.

In Works of Love, Kierkegaard wrote that the deepest level of our equality is our equality before God. His insight needs to be systematically pursued by both men and women, though men cannot achieve it for women, and women cannot bestow it upon men. The proper theological beginning for dialogue on equality is the radical equality of our dependence upon God, the misery that we equally share when we deny that dependence, and the mystery of our salvation from sin without preference to human status.<sup>14</sup>

The struggle for equality in our society too often is fought outside of the bounds of theology and, therefore, without the benefit of its insight and resources. In reality, as Kierkegaard has noted, it is only within the bounds of our relationship to God that equality can be addressed adequately. This brings the discussion of equality directly to the field of theology and its practical application. It is here that the study of Calvin may be of value. To understand his theology in his culture may help us to see more clearly how theology may contribute in our culture. As will be seen later, the rights of women was not a concern foreign to Calvin.

The above quotation also points to another issue that is becom-

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 69-70.

ing crucial in our culture; this is the question of authority and freedom. If we are really dependent on God, does this take away our own authority over ourselves? A related question is the degree of freedom we can experience in life. Are we free when we are our own authorities? Are we free when we are subject to God's will? A more basic question may be why we are even raising these questions. According to Calvin, the very reason for rebellion against authority is very often that authority is misused.<sup>15</sup> In this case it would seem that the use and misuse of authority and freedom is not so much to be blamed upon God as upon those who "represent" God in our society. This raises the subsequent question of whether the misuse of freedom and authority as a concept in theology or as action in the church has caused problems which now confront theology and the church and which need to be addressed. An examination of Calvin's theology will be done in light of these issues, being both challenged by them and possibly offering further directions in which they may be proceed.

A very flammable issue in our society is that of women's rights. Although Calvin has not been associated with the advancement of women's rights in most people's minds, there is some reason to make the connection. To study his theology which in many ways

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<sup>15</sup>J. Calvin, Sermons on the Ten Commandments (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) 143.

brought up the modern questions of the role of women in society will undoubtedly be valuable. Until now this has not been done except in a few isolated studies. The need for this address of a classical theological system to the women's rights issue is called for by Oden:

Christianity is giving the women's movement so little of its depth. . . . The movement urgently needs the wisdom of classical Christianity, but thus far traditional Christian reflection has failed to reach out for it deeply, allowing itself to be too much on the defensive. Only the Jewish-Christian understanding of sin can save the woman's movement from its own self-deceptions, and place its already keen awareness of human alienation in the context of divine providence.<sup>16</sup>

We will seek to give some of the strength of Calvin's theology to issues of the women's movement, giving them new and positive directions for study. As some of the feminist critiques of Calvin's thought also are considered we may possibly see that Calvin's theology must be modified for our purposes in light of new information and patterns of thought.

The question remains as to why Calvin should be used as a representative of classical Christian theology. Certainly earlier theologians could be used who represent the times of the early ecumenical councils; however, there are compelling reasons to use Calvin instead of these earlier theologians.

First of all, the influence of Calvin has continued in the West

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<sup>16</sup>Oden, 67-68.

from the sixteenth century on down to the twentieth century. Some of the laws which we still have in western countries are laws originally passed in Geneva during the time of Calvin.<sup>17</sup> The theology of Calvin, therefore, in some measure complements our society. Also, it is Calvin's theology that is beginning to stimulate the minds of many people once more today.

It is remarkable that in this age of stress and perplexity, when most people are absorbed in problems that seem far removed from his interests, Calvin's writings have been read with renewed attention and have vitally affected trends and movements in every section of theological and Christian social thought.<sup>18</sup>

McNeill wrote the above observation in 1954. Since that time it seems that the interest is still growing. In a recent personal conversation, a theological librarian observed that much more of the material by and about Calvin was being checked out than in any of his previous twenty years as a librarian. The interest also seems to be crossing many "dividing lines" in theology as well. In giving reason why he is interested in Calvin, Graham notes the following:

But my more pointed proposition is that Calvin's thought is still capable of direct reformatory power in contemporary society. A young Catholic historian affirms that Calvin's thought has continuing religious meaning: "We are persuaded that the reforming

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<sup>17</sup>See the discussions of W. Graham, The Constructive Revolutionary (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971) and A. Bieler, The Social Humanism of Calvin (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961)

<sup>18</sup>J. McNeill, History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) 93.



vocation of Calvin possesses a positive significance for the (future) history of the church. . . .<sup>19</sup>

A second reason for using Calvin is in order to dispel some of the myths about Calvin which possibly keep people from taking seriously other classical expressions of theology as well. Few people are aware that Calvin ". . . encouraged his people when in trouble to come to him for 'counsel and consolation,' and sought in private interviews the amendment of their lives."<sup>20</sup> Rather, many people think of Calvin as someone who caused trouble for people rather than relieving it. It is true that Calvin had some rigid beliefs and could be very unsympathetic at times; but to emphasize these points of his character alone leads to a very distorted view. Graham notes many of the negative things said about Calvin, which are often based upon fact, and then observes:

All of the items mentioned. . . are part of the material taught in humanities classes or reviewed without understanding by a Stefan Zweig. They are dished up as if Calvin contributed nothing to Protestantism, but simply brought the Inquisition into the Reformation. This, as we have argued, is simply not so. These conditions had long existed everywhere. But they do show the Reformer in a bad light precisely because his theology was weighted toward love and justice. They serve, perhaps, as warnings (if we need any) that even the common good must be protected with discretion, that evildoers must be tried justly and punished mercifully, that the public weal does not demand individual woe. Or, as C.S. Lewis has said somewhere: It takes a saint to make an

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<sup>19</sup>Graham, 25.

<sup>20</sup>McNeill, 150.

inquisitor. That is, you have to care more about god and evil than most of us do to want to take extreme measures against evil.<sup>21</sup>

Calvin was concerned about love and justice and how this might be brought to bear upon the ills of society. He undoubtedly made mistakes in his analysis, but nevertheless his focus on love and justice can still be valuable to us. As C.S. Lewis has said somewhere also, our society focuses on kindness as the all-important virtue to the exclusion of other virtues which may be just as valid. To focus on any one virtue, Lewis observes, may make it demonic. We are, therefore, in need of a theology that can offer a balance to our perspective.

One last reason for using Calvin is because of his concern for the growth of the people to whom he ministered. This concern for growth is also a contemporary issue; however, Calvin offers some interpretations of growth which have not been emphasized or considered recently. He believes that people should get to know themselves as a part of growth, but he then also recognizes that many times people will see negative parts of themselves.

With good reason the ancient proverb strongly recommended knowledge of self to man. For if it is considered disgraceful for us not to know all that pertains to the business of human life, even more detestable is our ignorance of ourselves, by which, when making decisions in necessary matters, we miserably deceive and

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<sup>21</sup>Graham, 169-170.

even blind ourselves!

But since this precept is so valuable, we ought more diligently to avoid applying it perversely. This, we observe, has happened to certain philosophers, who, while urging man to know himself, propose the goal of recognizing his own worth and excellence. And they would have him contemplate in himself nothing but what swells him with empty assurance and puffs him up with pride (Genesis 1:27).<sup>22</sup>

Clearly Calvin is concerned with growth that starts on firm foundations. It has to be growth that takes into account the nature of evil in the world. Growth that overcomes evil is real growth and occurs through a restoration of the image of God. As Wallace notes: "That our lives should be conformed to the image of God is therefore a most important aspect of Calvin's conception of the Christian life and of his ethics."<sup>23</sup> The image of God, evil, and people's reactions to these concepts and their dealings with these realities, these are the issues around which Calvin takes up the topics of how pastoral care must be given. These are issues that can be focused in a more specific consideration of anthropology. To focus the pastoral issues through an anthropological framework is called for by Oates:

The pastor must keep each passing (psychotherapeutic) emphasis in touch with what David Roberts rightly called "a Christian view of man." The changing emphases in pastoral counseling seem to

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<sup>22</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 241-242 (II, 1, 1)

<sup>23</sup>R. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959) 107.

suggest great discontinuity unless the pastor has a full-orbed view of the backdrop of Christian understandings of man as a basis for continuity.<sup>24</sup>

The theological focus of this study will fall upon Calvin's anthropology and how it addresses the issues which have been set forth. The practical focus will be the demonstration of how grace may operate in pastoral counseling developed around Calvin's theology.

In order to observe the operation of grace, a preliminary definition of this term is necessary. Calvin used the concept of grace throughout his Institutes; however, there are two levels at which Calvin spoke of grace. There is the grace of Christ through which a person experiences salvation, and there is the grace of Christ which functions in life and is not necessarily related to salvation. Although the concepts of common, or general, grace and special grace are found in Calvin, they do not refer to these two levels of grace as is sometimes assumed.<sup>25</sup> Common grace is a gift of God to all people wherein ". . . God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty. Ever renewing its memory, he repeatedly sheds fresh drips."<sup>26</sup> At this level common

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<sup>24</sup>W. Oates, Pastoral Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 28-29.

<sup>25</sup>Calvin, Institutes, 276 (II, 2, 17)

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 43-44 (I, 3, 1)

grace is a ". . . sense of divinity which can never be effaced. . ."  
 from a person's mind.<sup>27</sup> Common grace is also described by Calvin  
 as "light of nature"<sup>28</sup>, the "heavenly grace within"<sup>29</sup>, "heavenly  
 providence"<sup>30</sup>, and a grace that does not cleanse the corrupted  
 nature of a person.<sup>31</sup> It is a grace whereby ". . . the wicked are  
 plied with the huge and repeated benefits of God's bounty, [but  
 because they do not recognize it] they bring upon themselves a  
 heavier judgment."<sup>32</sup>

Calvin understands special grace as a special granting of gifts  
 to a person. "For why is one person more excellent than another?  
 Is it not to display in common nature God's special grace, which, in  
 passing many by, declares itself bound to none?"<sup>33</sup> The differences  
 between people are then not attributed to chance but to a direct  
 action of God's grace, which gives no one cause for pride. It cannot  
 be denied, however, that saving faith is, for Calvin, also a special

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 45 (I, 3, 3)

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 48 (I, 4, 2)

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 54 (I, 5, 3)

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 60 (I, 5, 8)

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 292 (II, 3, 3)

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 579 (III, 2, 32)

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 276 (II, 2, 17) Note the same formulation regarding  
 grace elsewhere: "Here, however, is the surest and easiest solu-  
 tion to this question [of inequality]: these are not common gifts of  
 nature, but special graces of God, which he bestows. . . upon men  
 otherwise wicked." Ibid., 292 (II, 3, 4)

work of grace in a person's life. In speaking of the salvific work of Christ, Calvin wrote that ". . . Christ truly acquired and merited grace for us with his Father."<sup>34</sup> A specific character of this grace is the strength or potency it not only has in its effects upon the created world but also upon the redeemed world. ". . . Christ's grace is too much weakened unless we grant to his sacrifice the power of expiating, appeasing, and making satisfaction."<sup>35</sup> There is one originating locus of grace which is Christ. There are manifestations of this grace in various degrees among humanity both in issues of natural gifts and salvation.

For the sake of simplifying the relationship of the theological and practical aspects of this study, the definition of grace will be confined to Calvin's understanding excluding his discussion of salvific grace. Grace is, therefore, present through all creation due to the presence and action of Christ and is seen in special measure in some people demonstrating extraordinary gifts. This grace is sufficient to bring a "spark of the divine" into the life of any individual person, therefore, the work of God through Christ can be a significant aspect of the counseling of the pastoral counselor even when

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 530 (II, 17, 3)

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 532 (II, 17, 4) cf. also 533 (II, 17, 5); 529 (II, 17, 5); and 531 (II, 17, 4)

issues of salvation care not discussed or when the client is even hostile to Christianity.

It is not practical, however, to focus also upon salvific grace in this study, since its inclusion would bring in the systematic theological areas of Christology and soteriology. The anthropological focus is the primary concern in this study which specifically limits our inquiry to the common and special aspects of grace that are not primarily concerned with salvific issues. Although this study may give directions for study concerning salvific grace because of the unity in Calvin's thought, the following of these leads and the resulting relationships must await a study of its own. Nevertheless, a few words should be said about the context which Calvin's Christology provides for his anthropology as specifically related to his understanding of salvific grace.

Christology becomes important for Calvin because it is through Christ that human beings can relate to God after the fall without a certain penalty of death being levied against them. In looking at ourselves and the creation we might see some of the excellence of God as the Creator and formulate ethical approaches to relationships on this basis; but the paucity of this knowledge alone would still leave us ignorant. Calvin wrote:

Therefore, since we have fallen from life into death, the whole knowledge of God the Creator that we have discussed would be useless unless faith also followed, setting forth for us God our

Father in Christ.<sup>36</sup>

The entire focus of the discussion undertaken on anthropology, then, is only for the purpose of leading one to the point of recognizing the necessity of faith in Christ for life. Knowledge of ourselves as immortal spirits, knowledge of ourselves as worms, knowledge of ourselves as creatures with tremendous potential, knowledge of ourselves as creatures in bondage, all of this or any part of this becomes useless unless we are brought to the point of recognizing that through Jesus Christ, God would bring us to himself to live eternally being not only freed from the effects of the fall but even brought beyond the original state.

For Calvin, Jesus Christ is God.<sup>37</sup> This statement summarizes half of the true and sound wisdom we can possess.<sup>38</sup> The other half is the knowledge of ourselves.<sup>39</sup> These two parts of knowledge are entwined in such a manner that they can never be separated entirely.<sup>40</sup> However, we may focus on the knowledge of ourselves when we recognize the origin of our being. Recognizing this origin and the subsequent capacities of our nature should lead us to the

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<sup>36</sup>Calvin, Institutes, 341 (II, 4, 1)

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 347 (II, 4, 4)

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 35 (I, 1, 1)

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.



contemplation of Christ. That was Calvin's commitment in ministry; it must also be the purpose of this study.

The theological focus of anthropology is the starting point taken up in chapter two. How this theology then influences the practical issues is initially studied by observing Calvin's own methods of pastoral care in chapter three. It is here that we will see a Calvin who in many ways has been lost for many people. To study Calvin's written theology and then his "working" theology gives the opportunity to reflect upon what were the inconsistencies of his writing and actions. This will help us to modify or emphasize aspects of Calvin's theology in ways that may be helpful for us today. The directions in which this modification is needed can be seen more clearly and be supported by a study of some of the primary issues in our society, which is the topic of chapter four. Here we will look at the critiques of Calvin from a psychoanalytic and feminist perspective. The outcome will dictate to us areas at which Calvin's theology needs to be developed further for our society in ways that still do not violate the principles of Calvin's theology itself.

Chapter five will be a presentation of two case studies. These case studies will demonstrate therapy being done within the framework discussed in the previous chapters. As such, the techniques or tools of therapy will not be the primary focus as much as the

influence and communication of the religious framework in which the counseling took place. This chapter, therefore, does not deny the usage and value that may be found in psychological and psychoanalytical techniques but is more specifically concerned with demonstrating the distinctively different flavor that pastoral counseling has as compared to the counseling of other disciplines.

The last chapter will summarize and draw conclusions from this study of Calvin and counseling. It will state what this study has demonstrated and also will more clearly set forth the areas that are open for further investigation.

## Chapter II

## CALVIN'S ANTHROPOLOGY

When studying Calvin's view of human nature, it is most instructive to consider the order with which he deals with its various aspects in his major work, The Institutes of the Christian Religion. This systematic presentation of Calvin's thought enables us to organize the material of his commentaries and correspondence in a logical way which he has begun himself.

In book I of his Institutes, Calvin considers at length the aspects of the image of God in the human race and how we can recognize it in society. In considering the image of God in book I, Calvin ties it to the fall of humanity. The two aspects, the image of God and the fall of humanity, cannot be separated; however, Calvin always places the image as the logical priority in consideration. In book I he writes that the ". . . knowledge of ourselves is twofold: namely, to know what we were like when we were first created and what our condition became after the fall of Adam."<sup>1</sup>

It is in book II of the Institutes where Calvin really begins an in-depth discussion of the state of humanity and the problem of sin.

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<sup>1</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 183 (I, 15, 1)

However in introducing this discussion, Calvin first of all once more points to the fact of the presence of the image of God.

But knowledge of ourselves lies first in considering what we were given at creation and how generously God continues his favor toward us, in order to know how great our natural excellence would be if only it had remained unblemished. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The image of God has priority.

However, awareness of the image must not lead to self-admiration. Calvin speaks of the shame of the fall in the same breath as the awareness of the image. Pride is an ever-present threat for Calvin, and he cautions the reader and himself to be aware of the temptation. The recognition of this weakness of pride is the door by which Calvin enters the scriptures in seeking the standard of truth. He knows that people would rather hear of the image than of sin.

I am quite aware how much more pleasing is that principle which invites us to weigh our good traits rather than to look upon our miserable want and dishonor, which ought to overwhelm us with shame. There is, indeed, nothing that man's nature seeks more than to be flattered.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin recognizes the dangers of pride that may be present in the consideration of the image of God in humanity. Nevertheless, he finds the image of God the necessary starting point and repeatedly emphasizes its importance. He begins with paradise and the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 242 (II, 1, 1)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

perfection of the human race before a consideration of the fallenness:

"God would not have us forget our original nobility, which he had bestowed upon our father Adam, and which ought truly to arouse in us a zeal for righteousness and goodness."<sup>4</sup> As Calvin specifically outlines the procedure he will follow, he once more states the proper order of the consideration of human nature.

. . . let us divide the knowledge that man ought to have of himself. First, he should consider for what purpose he was created and endowed with no mean gifts. By this knowledge he should arouse himself to meditation upon divine worship and the future life. Secondly, he should weigh his own abilities -- or rather, lack of abilities. When he perceives this lack, he should lie prostrate in extreme confusion, so to speak, reduced to nought.<sup>5</sup>

In speaking of the gifts which we have been given, Calvin has followed his own advice regarding the proper order in discussion. His first book of the Institutes dealt with the image of God and the second book dealt with the fall of humanity.

Our discussion of Calvin's view of human nature obviously must begin with a more extended analysis of how the concept of the image of God functions in humanity. It is a pastoral as well as a theological point Calvin makes when he wrote, ". . . before we come to the miserable condition of man to which he is now subjected, it is

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 244 (II, 1, 3)

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

worthwhile to know what he was like when first created."<sup>6</sup>

When the image of God is properly understood, the relevance of Calvin's conception both of the fall of humanity and restoration through Jesus Christ can be comprehended more clearly. It is because Calvin's conception of the image of God is related so closely to the rest of his theology that the concept of the image functions with real power in his thought, especially in relation to Christology and soteriology. But our primary focus will be the relationship between the image of God and anthropology.

Torrance has noted concerning Calvin that ". . . in the vast bulk of his work where he sticks closely to the Scripture there is much profound theology that has never been sufficiently brought to light. This is particularly true in regard to Calvin's teaching about the imago dei."<sup>7</sup> It is important to bring to light some of this theology in its relationship to pastoral counseling. Too often the practical emphasis of Calvin's theology is not discussed when he meant his theology to be very practical.

In considering the image of God as found in the thought of Calvin, it is necessary to recognize initially that Calvin uses the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>T. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 8.

concept of the image in a two-fold sense. Torrance states well this distinction:

Calvin uses imago dei in a twofold sense: 1) In a general sense, in which all creation is said to reflect (as in a mirror) the glory of God. God images Himself in nature, by beholding the works of His hands. . . . 2) In a particular sense, in which man specially is said to reflect (as in a mirror) the glory of God, by an intelligible response to the Word. Strictly speaking, it is God who images Himself in men, and that means that He graciously embraces man as His child in Christ the express Image of His glory.<sup>8</sup>

In order to be consistent to the thought of Calvin it is necessary first of all to consider the image in its narrower, or particular sense. This approach is necessary because "Calvin's wider use of the imago dei is grounded upon the special relation of man to the Word of God, that is, upon the narrower sense of the imago dei."<sup>9</sup> The "Word of God" in this context refers primarily to the person of Jesus Christ, through whom we see the narrower sense of the image exhibited most explicitly.

In considering the narrower sense of the image of God, or of humanity as the image, Calvin does not conceive of the human being as in any way sharing the substance of God and in that way possessing the image of God. Calvin specifically attacks and refutes such an

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 42.

idea and considers it to be a grievous Manichean error.<sup>10</sup> Rather, humanity is said to be in the image of God because of the "irradiation" of God as the only true light upon the human race. It is necessary to conceptualize this irradiation coming from the person of Christ, since it is Christ who is central in the restoration of the image of God for humanity.

Since God is the only light by which we must all be illumined, so this light is shed on us (so to speak) only by such irradiation. The latter term reminds us that God is known truly and firmly only in Christ. His likeness is not just veiled and concealed, but it is an express image which represents God himself, just as a coin bears the image of the die-stamp from which it is struck. Indeed the Apostle goes even further and says that the substance of the Father is in some way engraven on Christ.<sup>11</sup>

In this we see that not only is humanity reflecting the image of God as if through irradiation, but that Christ is different from humanity in general in that he actually shares somehow the image of God in substance. In this sense we are children of God in a way different than Christ. Our adoption as children comes through the Spirit which proceeds from both Father and Son. "When Scripture calls us the children of God, it is not referring to the transmission or origin of substance, but to

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<sup>10</sup>Institutes, 190ff. (I, 15, 5)

<sup>11</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1963) 8, 1:3.



the grace of the Spirit regenerating us to newness of life."<sup>12</sup>

The image is also a basis for immortality. Torrance writes in describing Calvin's view, "The image reflected in man is not a matter of his natural being, but is above nature, and is grounded in a special relation to the familiar presence of God which distinguishes man from all other created beings on the earth."<sup>13</sup> As the image of God raises humanity above the rest of nature, it singles out humanity for a special enduring relationship with God that goes beyond death. Calvin finds evidences for this immortality of humanity by considering the concept of soul in relation to body. Since the term soul is used with many definitions, it is first of all necessary to consider what Calvin means by the term soul.

It was almost inconceivable to Calvin that anyone might wish to deny that the individual possesses a soul. What was more the question to him was how the soul was defined. He writes: "That man consists of a soul and a body ought to be beyond controversy. Now I understand by the term "soul" an immortal yet created essence, which is his nobler part. Sometimes it is called "spirit". "<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 227, 8:44.

<sup>13</sup>Torrance, 73.

<sup>14</sup>Institutes, 184 (I, 15, 2)

Calvin worked with the Hebrew language and understood that the individual is viewed in the creation account as a unity. He, therefore, speaks of the individual as being both body and soul, but as both together. The soul animates the body and is a part of the earthly body.<sup>15</sup>

The soul is the primary locus to which we look to understand the nature of the presence of the image of God in the individual.

For although God's glory shines forth in the outer man, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul. I do not deny, indeed, that our outward form, in so far as it distinguishes and separates us from brute animals, at the same time more closely joins us to God. And if anyone wishes to include under "image of God" the fact that, "while all other living things being bent over look earthward, man has been given a face uplifted, bidden to gaze heavenward and to raise his countenance to the stars", I shall not contend too strongly -- provided it be regarded as a settled principle that the image of God, which is seen or glows in these outward marks is spiritual.<sup>16</sup>

In his commentary on Genesis, Calvin uses different language: "Thus the chief seat of the Divine image was in his mind and heart, where it was eminent: yet was there no part of him in which some scintillations of it did not shine forth."<sup>17</sup> This is restated by Calvin in his Institutes when he wrote, "And although the primary seat of

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<sup>15</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1948) 112, 2:7.

<sup>16</sup>Institutes, 186 (I, 15, 3)

<sup>17</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 95, 1:26.

the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow."<sup>18</sup> The seat of the image has been described as being in the soul in one instance and in the mind and heart in the other instance. Rather than seeing this as an inconsistency of thought in Calvin, it is best to understand the soul of an individual as being very much located in the mind and heart -- or the mind and heart in the soul. Calvin recognizes the person as a unified being and only distinguishes between the physical body and that which enlivens it. The enlivening of the human body is the function of the soul.

At this point we must not assume that the image of God is the soul or that the locus of the image of God is a possession of the soul. "To think of this image, or to try to use it, as if it were a natural possession of the soul, is an act of impiety which does despite to grace."<sup>19</sup> It is the personality, the heart, the mind, that is the seat of the image rather than the possessor of the image. Because of the unity of the human being, this means that the image of God is also seen in the physical; but this is not of primary importance in under-

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<sup>18</sup>Institutes, 188 (I, 15, 3)

<sup>19</sup>Torrance, 52.

standing the nature of humanity.

Since the central importance of the soul is seen apart from the body, Calvin can focus on the function of the soul by studying more directly the aspects of the mind. He finds that,

. . . the human soul consists of two faculties, understanding and will. Let the office, moreover, of understanding be to distinguish between objects, as each seems worthy of approval or disapproval; while that of the will, to choose and follow what the understanding pronounces good, but to reject and flee what it disapproves.<sup>20</sup>

It can thus be the function of the soul to lead a person to the understanding of the true religion in life. The soul, functioning properly, is able to lead the individual in this way. It will be seen, however, that the soul has lost this capacity to such a degree that it only can perform this function in the present state through the enlivening and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, in the present state the soul retains enough of its capacities in mirroring the image of God to be able to be used by the Spirit of God as the Spirit restores or recreates the natural functioning of the soul as it was created.

The soul, enlivened by the Spirit, is capable of promoting relationship with God in this life and also presents to human perception the idea of personal immortality. The soul is at least responsible indirectly for the mind perceiving that the human existence is

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<sup>20</sup>Institutes, 194 (I, 15, 7)

more than just an accident of clay that will pass away when consciousness ceases. Even after the fallenness of humanity is considered, Calvin still finds evidences of afterlife that leads us to sense our own immortality, especially in the conscience:

. . . (men) do not think they will survive death; yet in the meantime the light has not been so extinguished in the darkness that they remain untouched by a sense of their own immortality. Surely the conscience, which, discerning between good and evil, responds to God's judgment, is an undoubted sign of the immortal spirit.<sup>21</sup>

The evidences of immortality are also evident to Calvin in the comparison of the potential and gifts of humanity as compared to those of the animals and the rest of creation. He observes that our intelligence can comprehend things that are extra-physical.<sup>22</sup> Of all these capabilities he says, "In short, the many pre-eminent gifts with which the human mind is endowed proclaim that something divine has been engraved upon it; all these are testimonies of an immortal essence."<sup>23</sup>

To speak of and acknowledge an afterlife raises the question of how humanity or the human nature will participate in such an existence. The Platonic influence that would lead to a division of body

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 184 (I, 15, 2)

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 185 (I, 15, 2)

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 184-185 (I, 15, 2)

and soul, excluding the body from any place in immortality, is not unfamiliar to Calvin. Calvin, however, will not have any of this thought in his understanding of immortality. He has recognized that there is a difference between body and soul, but he does not believe that the soul is the "good" and the body "evil". Rather, both are to be redeemed. The order of redemption is first of all the reception of the soul to God upon death and then the subsequent raising of the body in the resurrection. The soul and body are meant to be a unity which, though divided upon physical death, are to be reunited in perfection.

Now, unless the soul were something essential, separate from the body, Scripture would not teach that we dwell in houses of clay (Job 4:19) and at death leave the tabernacle of the flesh, putting off what is corruptible so that at the Last Day we may finally receive our reward, according as each of us has done in the body.<sup>24</sup>

It is the soul that is the principal part of a person, but that part is never complete by itself until it is joined with the body which will be perfected.

Just as there is a basic unity between the soul and body even though they are to remain distinct in the understanding, so the image of God is found in not only the soul but also in the body. The body is part of the image of God because it is part of the creation of God.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 185 (I, 15, 2)

It, however, receives an honor greater than just a created body because of its association with the immortal soul. Rather than the body exhibiting the image of God by its own merit, the image which the body displays is in large measure drawn into the crowning creation of the soul. This close unity can be seen when Calvin wrote:

. . . although the soul is not man, yet it is not absurd for man, in respect to his soul, to be called God's image; even though I retain the principle I just now set forward, that the likeness of God extends to the whole excellence by which man's nature towers over all the kinds of living creatures.<sup>25</sup>

The "whole excellence" of each person includes the body, a part of human and created nature, a part of the image of God, a part of the immortality which awaits each person.

In speaking of the body as also reflecting the image of God, Calvin considers whether there is a legitimate reason for finding a distinction between the image and the likeness of God.<sup>26</sup> Although Calvin recognized that many, probably most of the commentators found a difference, he did not. He recognized the Hebrew tendency of repetition, particularly when using poetical language. He reasserted his position in regard to his understanding of these terms in his Institutes when he wrote, "Also, there is no slight quarrel over

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 188 (I, 15, 3)

<sup>26</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 94, 1:26.

"image" and "likeness" when interpreters seek a nonexistent difference between these two words, except that "likeness" has been added by way of explanation."<sup>27</sup>

Because of the state of creation after the fall and because the body displays the image of God in a secondary way as compared to the soul, Calvin could not easily speak about the specific aspects or ways in which the body may presently display the image. He did, however, specifically refute an anthropomorphic view that the body resembles a "body" of God. Calvin will not say that the body displays the image in the narrower sense even though it displays the admirable workmanship of God.<sup>28</sup> The body has also fallen from its created state. But the body can participate more closely with the narrower sense of the image of God as found in the soul. This is not possible for any other part of creation sharing in the broader sense of the image of God. Because of this, a person not only participates in the more particular understanding of the image of God but also is the preeminent example of God's image in the general, or wider, understanding of God's image.

The image of God has been considered primarily in the parti-

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<sup>27</sup>Institutes, 187 (I, 15, 3)

<sup>28</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 94, 1:26.



cular sense up to this point. To understand human nature in this particular sense is to understand that humanity has a special relationship to God.

. . . the image of God in Calvin's special sense has to do with man's unique relation to God in His self-communication and His glory, not just through the bare Word of command but through a familiar Word which brings man into a friendly relation with the Father.<sup>29</sup>

The dynamics of this relationship and the centrality of the Word and Spirit will need to be considered more thoroughly in a later discussion of the restoration of the fallen image.

The image of God will now be considered in the wider sense. "Under this wider sense, imago dei refers to the workmanship of God in the universe, and that includes man himself as the preeminent specimen of God's handiwork."<sup>30</sup> To study the image in the wider sense includes a study of humanity itself and also a study of the creation.

In the creation, which is a mirror of the image of God in the broader sense, people need to live in order and harmony. It is the order and harmony that show us the functioning of the image of God. God is a God of order and not a God of disorder. This principle extends not only to the physical creation but also to the relationships

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<sup>29</sup>Torrance, 44-45.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 38.

demonstrated within the physical creation. The close union of order and harmony with God in creation Torrance correctly finds explained by Calvin in his concept of rectitude.

As a parallel to this imago-relation between man and God, Calvin points to the relation of Adam and Eve in their mutual society, and just proportion, and in the response and obedience of one to the other. The characteristic order of this imago-relation Calvin calls rectitude. In its general sense, rectitude refers to constant dependence upon God, the order of grace in which the world was made, the order of creation. . . . Because men have been created for such intercourse and communion with God, they have intercourse and society among themselves so that their life in community, characterized by rectitude, may image the glory of God.<sup>31</sup>

Although the discussion of creation might be expected to focus on the physical aspects of the world, this is not the emphasis of Calvin when he speaks about creation. Although he does not exclude the physical, he does not attribute to the physical an exclusive role. It was noted earlier that Calvin had no particular difficulty in allowing someone to believe that the upright carriage of the human body was a signal of the special sense of the image of God, but he refused to let this consideration be a central feature of the understanding of the image. In a similar way Calvin looks at the creation and finds the expression of the image of God not only or primarily in the physical beauty of the aspects of creation but rather in the beauty

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 35

of the order and harmony which the features of creation demonstrate in their relationships. It is then natural for Calvin to see that the marriage relationship can point us toward the image of God most effectively since two people created in the image of God, in both a natural and particular sense, combine these aspects of the image of God in a way not possible by the creation in general. Torrance notes that while "Calvin does not quite say that it is as man and woman are one in a mutual society that they image the glory of God, . . . that seems to be implied again and again."<sup>32</sup>

In speaking of marriage, Calvin himself notes that the original intention of God was that the marriage state be one of harmony and fulfillment. The problem that a present marriage has in displaying the image of God is not a problem of the marriage ideally conceived or created but is a problem of the corrupted state of marriage which all marriages in the present demonstrate to a degree. In considering the statement of Paul, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Corinthians 7:1), and comparing this to the statement of God, "It is not good for the man to be without a wife" (Genesis 2:18), Calvin wrote the following in answering the apparent inconsistency,

The condition, which the Lord says, in that passage (Genesis), is evil, Paul teaches here to be good. I answer that where the wife

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 44.

is a help to her husband, making his life happy, then that is in accordance with God's intention. For God so ordered it in the beginning that the man without a wife was half a man, as it were (quasi dimidius homo), and felt himself lacking in help which he particularly needed; and the wife was, as it were, the completion of the man (quasi viri complementum). Afterwards, sin made its attack and spoiled that institution of God, for in place of so great a blessing grievous affliction (poena) has entered in, so that marriage is the source and means of many troubles. Therefore whatever evil or trouble there is in marriage springs from the corruption of God's institution. Although there is still something left of the original blessing, so that the life of a single person is often much more miserable than that of a married person, yet, in view of the fact that married people are involved in many misfortunes, Paul is justified in advising that it would be good for a man to keep from it.

This passage explains why Calvin does not quite say that the relationship of marriage displays the image of God in itself. It is not that marriage was not originally intended to do so; but, because of the perversity of the human race which led to the fall, the image of God can no longer be seen or delineated with confidence in the relationship unless some restoration has taken place.

The order and harmony of the original creation has been defaced in the relationships between people and also in the relationships between humanity and the environment itself. The fall of humanity from the image of God included a fall of the creation and its representation of the image of God because of the integral union of humanity with the creation. Calvin still recognizes the tremendous service of

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<sup>33</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 135, 7:1.

creation and a measure of right relationship which is a cause for thanksgiving, but he also recognizes the imperfection of this relationship as compared to what it might have been. In speaking of the relationship of humanity to creation, Calvin wrote the following in a consideration of Psalm 8:7 which speaks of the dominion of humanity over creation.

There is no man of a mind so dull and stupid but may see, if he will be at the trouble to open his eyes, that it is by the wonderful providence of God that horses and oxen yield their service to men, -- that sheep produce wool to clothe them, -- and that all sorts of animals supply them with food for their nourishment and support, even from their own flesh. And the more that this dominion is apparent, the more ought we to be affected with a sense of the goodness and grace of our God as often as we either eat food, or enjoy any of the other comforts of life. We are, therefore, not to understand David as meaning that it is a proof that man is invested with dominion over all the works of God, because he clothes himself with the wool and the skins of beasts, because he lives upon their flesh, and because he employs their labor for his own advantage; for this would be inconclusive reasoning. He only brings forward this as an example, and as a mirror in which we may behold and contemplate the dominion over the works of his hands, with which God has honoured man. The sum is this: God, in creating man, gave a demonstration of his infinite grace and more than fatherly love towards him, which ought justly to strike us with amazement; and although, by the fall of man, that happy condition has been almost entirely ruined, yet there is still in him some remains of the liberality which God then displayed towards him, which should suffice to fill us with admiration.<sup>34</sup>

From this we see that even after the fall the creation still displays the imprint of the image of God. This is a notable point that must

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<sup>34</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Psalms (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 107-108, 8:7-9.

be recognized even though the exact nature of the fall has not yet been considered. Also, we see that the reason for the unordered relationship of people living in the creation is due to the fall of creation, which was occasioned by the fall of humanity; therefore, the order and harmony of the creation was disrupted by the disobedience of humanity. This begins to indicate that Calvin conceives of sin as an all-encompassing entity and not exclusively in terms of individual acts or sins.

Although order and harmony are the emphases of the broader sense of the image of God, it is incorrect to assume that Calvin therefore ignores the beauties of creation. While the physical beauties are secondary to the concepts of order they are nevertheless important and given for the benefit of humanity. Calvin wrote, "You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe, in its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness."<sup>35</sup>

J. T. McNeill finds Calvin going beyond most people in the praise of the creation as we see it:

There are in Calvin's work numerous passages of striking beauty in appreciation of the forms of nature. He praises the front and rear gardens and the exceptional view of a house he has hired for de Falais in Geneva (25 February 1547). Few

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<sup>35</sup>Institutes, 52 (I, 5, 1)

have written with equal admiration of the beauty of sun and stars, of birds and flowers. He is one of those who in the contemplation of nature feel 'a presence that disturbs us with the joy of elevated thought.' When he describes the exhilaration of beauty, he habitually speaks of it as a intimation of the bounty, and of the presence, of God. The living creatures are witness of God to men:

The little singing birds are singing of God; the beasts cry unto Him; the elements are in awe of Him, the mountains echo His name; the waves and fountains cast their glances at Him; grass and flowers laugh out to Him. Nor indeed need we labor to seek Him afar, since each of us may find Him within himself, inasmuch as we are all upheld and preserved by His power dwelling within us (Preface to the New Testament, 1535).

The glory of God, he observes (looking, says Domergue, from his window), reveals itself everywhere: the stars of heaven are 'a living picture (peinture vive) of the Majesty of God' (On Job, 12). In the Institutes (I, xiv, 20) he enjoins us not to be slow to take delight in 'the manifest and familiar works of God in this most beautiful theater,' the created world.<sup>36</sup>

In delighting in the creation Calvin recognizes that it is the believer who most clearly sees the beauty as the work of God and a reflection of God.<sup>37</sup> Thus the discussion of the broader sense of the image, both in order and harmony and in the physical creation, leads to the same place as the discussion of the image of God in the particular sense: to a recognition of the need to discuss the fall and restoration of the image.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the fall and restoration,

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<sup>36</sup>J. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) 232. The quote from Calvin is taken from the preface to Olivetan's French Bible edition of 1535.

<sup>37</sup>Institutes, 52 (I, 5, 1)

however, we must discuss the function of the broader concept of the image as a basis for the expression of the love of God. The expression of the love of God for those who have not experienced, or been given, a renewal of the image necessitates some understanding of the nature of the love and wrath of God. The necessity to understand this relationship can be seen in a passage of Calvin which Torrance quotes and then reflects upon himself.

"God accepts and takes pleasure in His children, in whom He sees the traces and lineaments of His own countenance. We have said elsewhere that regeneration is a renewal of the divine image in us. Since God, therefore, whenever He beholds His own face, justly loves it and holds it in honour, the life of believers when formed to holiness and justice is said not without cause to be pleasing to Him. But because believers when encompassed with mortal flesh are still sinners and their good works only begun savour of the corruption of the flesh, God cannot be propitious either to their persons or their works, unless He embraces them more in Christ than in themselves." That is spoken of the redeemed man, but it is also true of man in his original state. Whether in man originally or in man renewed in Christ, the image of God is basically that which God sees and fashions by His grace, the garment or ornament or badge with which He adorns men to mark them out as his sons.<sup>38</sup>

The point to recognize here is that God can love in his wrath, and he may demonstrate acts of love rather than acts of wrath in dealing with a member of creation that remains unredeemed. This can perhaps be recognized most clearly in Calvin's discussions of providence.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 807 (III, 17, 5) and Torrance, 43.



Calvin discusses the topic of providence in his Institutes directly after he has considered created human nature. This indicates from placement alone that Calvin believed that God deals with humanity initially from the basis of the created image. The love for the creation arises out of the fact that the creation is, that it exists, and this is followed by a love for what it can become. Existence does not precede the possibility of becoming in importance, but existence itself may be an acceptable ground for the expression of love.

Providence is not something general or all-encompassing in the sense that God does not deal with specific events or individuals. Rather, God's providence is specific. It deals with the minutest events and with individual people. God's providence is universal but specific with regard to the control of all that occurs.<sup>39</sup> Calvin defined providence in this way:

By Providence, we mean, not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven, from which He merely observes the things that are done in the world; but that all-active and all-concerned seatedness on His throne above, by which He governs the world which He Himself hath made. So that God, as viewed in the glass of His Providence, is not only the Maker of all things in a moment, but the perpetual Ruler of all things which he hath created. . . . we do not merely mean that He maintains and preserves that order of nature which He had originally purposed in Himself, but that He holds and continues a peculiar care of every single creature He has created.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Institutes, 203 (I, 16, 4) and 200 (I, 16, 3)

<sup>40</sup> J. Calvin, "The Secret Providence of God" in his Calvin's Calvinism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 224.

We can see God's goodness and love (as well as His correction) in His actions toward both those who accept Him and reject Him. In reference to the care of God given to the unjust, Calvin comments on the passage in Matthew 5:45 ("Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. "). He notes the beneficence of God toward the unjust which should be seen as a model for us.

He (God) wishes us to be imitators of His fatherly goodness and kindness. Not only have profane thinkers appreciated this point, but even the most worthless scorners of religion have been driven to admit, that in nothing are we more like God than in doing good works. In sum, Christ testifies that this will be the mark of our adoption, if we are kind to the bad and unworthy.<sup>41</sup>

Although Calvin recognized special love by God for those who are conforming to the image of Christ<sup>42</sup>, he also recognized a love by God for all those whom he has created in his own image. For Calvin, the image of God is a basis for love no matter how obscure or distorted it might be.

This evidence of love seen in God's providence starts at creation when the individual was created as a social person. The com-

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<sup>41</sup>J. Calvin, Harmony of the Gospels (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 199, Matthew 5:45.

<sup>42</sup>Calvin, "Secret Providence", 226. "The Scripture is filled with testimonies of this which declare that God keeps a more especial watch over the faithful."

munication was a necessary part of existence in order to relate both to God and to fellow persons. The fact of the fall did not extinguish this need for community. It was distorted but also lifted up as necessary for the subsequent existence of the human race. It will later be seen as central in the discussion of the church.

He (man) was created an intelligent being capable of response to and communication with God, and created such that his true life depends on the maintenance of that communication. At the same time such a creation meant that men are made for intercourse with one another. Man is essentially a "social animal". To this end all men are bound together by the sacred bond of the imago dei, and must treat each other in a mutual society only as in the image of God.<sup>43</sup>

Here Torrance recognizes Calvin's respect for the created person and the abilities of this person. While it is true that for Calvin a person can only truly demonstrate the image of God or the abilities granted by God through a restoration provided by God, it is also true that the unrestored person retains a capacity which enables a striving toward the truth and a level of insight.<sup>44</sup> Yet it should be emphasized that this capacity is not held without regard to God but rather is held because of the gracious providence of God which re-

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<sup>43</sup>Torrance, 45.

<sup>44</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 48, 2:15. "They (unbelievers) would not have instituted religious rites if they were not convinced that God ought to be worshipped or been ashamed of adultery and theft if they did not regard them both as evil."

cognizes the created image even outside of the redemptive act of Christ.

To assert that the person has value because of the image of God, even though the person may refuse to recognize this source of value, is not to say that God has given the image and then has left the person to individual desires without divine control. God's providence extends not only as gracious care to both the believer and the unbeliever but also as a control of all events with both the believer and unbeliever. Torrance accurately notes the following in relation to Calvin's understanding.

Man lives and moves and has his being in the unceasing visitation of the presence of God, and in the constant and continuous repetition of His pure grace. That is to say, Calvin thinks of man's being only in a continuously dynamic relation to God, or rather only in a continuously dynamic relation from God to man.<sup>45</sup>

But not only is this relationship dynamic, it is even more intimate than this.

Calvin also thinks of man as being consumed and renewed every instant of his being in the sense that he is continually being called out of non-being into being and life by the Work and Will of the Creator who is the Lord of life and death.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly the concept of providence includes the existence of the unbeliever in a very dynamic way. This observation is important for

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<sup>45</sup>Torrance, 61.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 62.

the pastoral practice of the church. It must be noted, however, in fairness to Calvin that his primary emphasis often was upon the providence of God as it related to the believer. It was only the believer who would really recognize the providence of God.

Nor will anyone profitably contemplate the Providence of God in the government of the world, as it is set before us in the Scriptures and seen by faith, but he who, feeling that he has to do so with his Maker and with the Creator of all things, first "bows the head" with that awe and reverence and with that humility which becomes one standing before such stupendous Majesty.<sup>47</sup>

It is after the providential love of God is recognized in humility that the believer then sees a responsibility to offer this love to all of God's creatures.

No matter what the condition of a fellow human being, the image of God is there displayed and operative. The tragic point is that the image is so often obscure and deformed that it is virtually impossible to recognize the person as a reflector of the image at all. Because of this we must consider the ability of the person to see the image of God in another person. This means a consideration of both the fall of the image and the possibilities of the restoration of the image. This relationship of fall and restoration has come to the foreground several times in the previous discussion and must now be addressed explicitly.

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<sup>47</sup> Calvin, "Secret Providence", 227.

The first point to be established is that in the theology of Calvin there is only a remnant left of the original image that was created in humanity. Even this remnant is a "frightful deformity" compared to the original creation. The reason only a remnant is left of the original image of God in humanity is directly related to the situation of the fall of the human race from the perfection displayed in the Garden of Eden. In speaking of Adam, who was our representative and, therefore, the one who represents humanity in general, Calvin wrote,

There is no doubt that Adam, when he fell from his state, was by this defection alienated from God. Therefore, even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity.<sup>48</sup>

Our ability to see the image cannot be dependent upon the state of humanity as we now find it. Neither can the starting-point be the creation. This is because the results of the fall have affected not only people but the creation as a whole. Creation is no longer an expression of the perfect order that paradise would have exhibited. The reality of earthquakes and particularly in Calvin's time of plagues, sickness, and death clearly mar the beauty of the creation. Considering the hardship of life in the sixteenth century, it is notable that Calvin did see great beauty in creation that spoke to

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<sup>48</sup>Institutes, 189 (I, 15, 4)

him of God's love so clearly. In the creation the fall is evident in that humanity is no longer lord of the environment except in an imperfect way. Animals and plants are still used to the service of humanity, but there are also weeds that do not respond to the dominion of humanity, there are animals that threaten people rather than submit to them.<sup>49</sup>

A comparison between the image of God seen in creation and the present representation of it leads Calvin almost to despair over the defacing that has taken place. At one point he writes, "True, it [the image] is not altogether extinguished; but, alas! how small a portion of it remains amidst the miserable overthrow and ruins of the fall."<sup>50</sup> At other points he can discern almost no trace of the image at all unless it has suffered some restoration.

Now God's image is the perfect excellence of human nature which shone in Adam before his defection, but was subsequently so vitiated and almost blotted out that nothing remains after the ruin except what is confused, mutilated, and disease-ridden. Therefore in some part it now is manifest in the elect, in so far as they have been reborn in the spirit; but it will attain its full splendor in heaven.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, at some points Calvin found it unnecessary even to consider

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<sup>49</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, 104, 8:7.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Institutes, 190 (I, 15, 5)

the remnants of the image as being present in the fallen person.

" . . . the image of God has been destroyed in us by the fall, . . . ." <sup>52</sup>

It is clear that Calvin does not take this statement as absolute when in the same context of the discussion he wrote,

But now, although some obscure lineaments of that image are found remaining in us; yet are they so vitiated and maimed, that they may truly be said to be destroyed. For besides the deformity which everywhere appears unsightly, this evil also is added, that no part is free from the infection of sin. <sup>53</sup>

It has become evident that the use of the concept of the image of God is directly linked with the defacing of the image in the fall of humanity. Up to this point the image has been considered as it was created. It was necessary to use data concerning the image from the present state as we see it restored in Jesus Christ because the restoration of the image in Christ is now virtually all that we have to enable us to understand what the original image of God was like. Clearly there is a need to understand what cataclysm has occurred in the history of the human race.

In the fall of the human race there was an act of humanity leaving the goodness of God and desiring to govern itself. In effect this led to the pollution of humanity because it left the goodness of God and sought to find goodness within itself. This entailed a radi-

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<sup>52</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 94, 1:26.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 95.



cal alternative of the relationship between God and humanity. No longer is the goodness or character of God found in humanity except to an almost infinitesimal degree. Even though humanity is clearly above the animals in that the image of God is reflected; yet in a real way humanity is also fallen even below the level of the animals because of the choice it had and the subsequent choices it made which led to the fall.

In speaking of the fall, the catagories of the spiritual (or particular) sense of the image and the natural (or broader) sense of the image must once again serve as a focus for the discussion. It is Calvin's view that the fall completely destroyed the spiritual image of God as it had been reflected in the human race. Also, the natural image was so defaced and perverted that it is virtually an abomination to refer to this as the image of God. The defacing of the natural image means a pollution of the natural abilities because of the fall of the spiritual image. Any good element remaining of natural ability is used for the purposes of greater pollution. This perversion of the natural gifts due to the destruction of the spiritual image leads to even a more radical understanding of the fall. The mind, or soul, as the seat of the divine image not only loses the spiritual nature in the fall but becomes unable even to govern the person in a fruitful

way.<sup>54</sup> In a sense the person chooses the effects of the fall every day and every time a choice is made.

Calvin's attitude to humanity after the fall can only be described by using some of his own words as a demonstration of his thought.

Torrance notes some of the significant passages.

"There is more worth in all the vermin of the world than there is in man, for he is a creature in whom the image of God has been effaced." Again speaking of man after the fall, Calvin says: "And truly, it was a sad and horrible spectacle that he in whom recently the image of God was shining should lie hidden under fetid skins to cover his own disgrace, and that there should be more comeliness in a dead animal than in a living man."<sup>55</sup>

In speaking of our present body in comparison to our future bodies Calvin wrote the following.

. . . this body which we bear is not an everlasting abode but a frail tabernacle, which will soon be reduced to nothing. Besides, it is liable to so many miseries and so many shaming infirmities, that it may justly be called vile and full of ignominy.<sup>56</sup>

Our nature after the fall should effect us as follows: "For by nature already they [men] will find such poverty in themselves that they will

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<sup>54</sup>Torrance, 83. Cf. also Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 8:21, and Calvin, Commentary on Romans, 7:14.

<sup>55</sup>Torrance, 88. Cf. also Calvin, Sermons on Job (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 2:1, and Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 3:2.

<sup>56</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Philip-  
pians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 283, 3:21.

have good reason to be thoroughly dejected."<sup>57</sup> Also he wrote, "It is true that if men well examine themselves without hypocrisy, they must find themselves wrapped in so much evil that they are ashamed of themselves and that they are completely beaten down; especially ourselves."<sup>58</sup>

This post-fall condition affects all of the natural and spiritual characteristics of the person: the ability to reason, the use of the will, the use of the emotions, as well as the inclinations of the physical body.

It is the ability to reason that Calvin considers the "light" of the created person. This is seen clearly in his commentary on the first chapter of John where he wrote in reference to the phrase, "the life was the light of men".

I think that this is a reference to that part of life in which men surpass the other animate creatures. It is as if he were saying that the life given to men was not life in general but life united with the light of reason.<sup>59</sup>

It is the light that proceeds from the life which is Christ. It is the light which in measure can still be seen in the created person as the

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<sup>57</sup> J. Calvin, The Deity of Christ and other Sermons (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 36.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, Sermons on Job, 54, 9:1-6.

<sup>59</sup> J. Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, 11, 1:4.

image of God but which is also suffering from the fall. Because of the fall the light of the person can only be used to greatest benefit if this light is renewed through a connection with the original life from which it was created. The present status of the light in all humanity is "very different from that sound nature with which they were endowed in the beginning. Their mind, which should have been radiant in every part, is sunk in the shades of unhappy blindness."<sup>60</sup> The light is always very closely connected to Jesus Christ but always remains defined as the rational or reasoning capacities of the human race. The reasoning ability has fallen to such an extent that the clarity of light can really only be seen in its purity if it is integrally connected to the source or life of that light, which is Life. The light is seen most clearly, therefore, in those people who are connected to the source of life. This is supported by John (the writer of the gospel), according to Calvin, when John sees that John the Baptist was recognized as a witness of light. The clarity of the light is seen by Calvin in the apostles in that their connection to the Christ restored the ability to reason.<sup>61</sup> Yet without the connection to the life, the light is virtually ineffectual even though a glimmer

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 13f.

of it may still be present.

Although the Son of God has always called men to Himself by this poor light still left in us, the Evangelist says that it was ineffectual, because 'seeing, they did not see'. For after man was estranged from God, such ignorance held sway over his mind that whatever light remains in it lies choked and ineffectual. Experience also proves this daily. For even those who are not regenerate by the Spirit of God still exercise a certain reason, so that we are plainly taught that man was made not only to breathe but to have understanding. Yet led by their reason they do not reach or even approach God; and so all their intelligence is in the end nothing but vanity.<sup>62</sup>

The real depth of the fall for Calvin is also seen clearly in a consideration of his understanding of concupiscence as contrasted with previous understandings. Augustine defined concupiscence as "the law of sin in our sinful flesh"<sup>63</sup> but did not consider these disordered desires to be sin themselves. Rather, they were the temptation to sin arising from the weakness of the flesh.<sup>64</sup> The subsequent theologians of the church built upon these views and Calvin notes some of the views as expressed by Peter Lombard.<sup>65</sup> Calvin, however, follows Luther and very much sees concupiscence itself as sin -- sin of the kind that human effort can never exterminate. He

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>63</sup>See Institutes, 252 (II, 1, 9) footnote 16 quoting Augustine, On Marriage and Concupiscence.

<sup>64</sup>Institutes, 602 (III, 3, 10)

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 252 (II, 1, 9)

writes:

Those who have said that original sin is "concupiscence" have used an appropriate word, if only it be added -- something that most will by no means concede -- that whatever is in man, from the understanding to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, has been defiled and crammed with the concupiscence.<sup>66</sup>

Given the natural unredeemed person there is no possibility of pure God-pleasing action. It is this defining of the state of humanity that can make Calvin appear as an extreme pessimist with regard to the capacities of people, particularly if the image of God is not restored in them.

Clearly Calvin feels some despair over the condition to which humanity has fallen. However it does not do justice to Calvin to consider people to be of no value unless there is a restoration of the image and a new use of the "light". ". . . when we come to think of man as he actually is, a fallen being, to do him justice and to do justice to the Creator, we must still think of man, even in his fallen condition, within the context of the grace from which he has fallen."<sup>67</sup> The theology of Calvin is concerned with the communication of grace and therefore the doctrine of depravity functions as a corollary of grace.<sup>68</sup> The true recognition of the nature of depravity comes only

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 252 (II, 1, 8)

<sup>67</sup>Torrance, 84.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 85.

after a recognition of the reality of grace. It is after the grace of God through Jesus Christ has been brought to recognition by the Holy Spirit that one sees that grace has always been operative in life -- though unrecognized in the state of unbelief.<sup>69</sup> The image of God as a gracious gift is operative even in those who deny its presence.

The place where the image of God may be seen most clearly in humanity today is in those persons who have had the image restored in them by the restoration that is available from taking on the person of Jesus Christ. The "taking on" is not so crucial to understand at this point as the fact that the image is seen most clearly in a study of Jesus Christ and the church as his body. It is in the way that we see the image of God in Jesus Christ that we can most clearly see it in our fellows. Without the restoration of the image of God we would be able to see only a very, very little of what the original image was like. The restoration is what takes place in regeneration. Wallace notes correctly this aspect of Calvin when he writes, "It is by contemplating what happens in our regeneration that we see what the image of God must originally have been like."<sup>70</sup> Regeneration occurs in that we, who have fallen away from God through our first represen-

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<sup>69</sup>Calvin, Commentary on John, 3:3ff; and Calvin, Commentary on Romans, 6:21.

<sup>70</sup>R. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959) 105.

tative Adam, have come into a relationship with God once more through the work of a second Adam. This right relationship is possible in part because of the restoration of the image; also in part because the offense involved in losing the image is resolved. Calvin said of this process:

Nevertheless, it seems that we do not have a full definition of "image" if we do not see more plainly those faculties in which man excels, and in which he ought to be thought the reflection of God's glory. That, indeed, can be nowhere better recognized than from the restoration of his corrupted nature. There is no doubt that Adam, when he fell from his state, was by this defec-tion alienated from God. Therefore, even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity. Consequently, the beginning of our recovery of salvation is in that restoration which we obtain through Christ, who also is called the Second Adam for the reason that he restores us to true and complete integrity.<sup>71</sup>

Earlier, the latter part of the above quote was used to show the degree to which the fall affected every person. Now we are able to see that even in the truth of this massive effect of the fall, Calvin can find immeasurable amount of hope in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is seen to be the basis of redemption and a restoration of order which is sufficient for even the degraded state in which humanity finds itself. This must be seen as a basis for hope. No matter how corrupted a person believes life to be, it cannot be worse

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<sup>71</sup>  
Institutes, 189 (I, 15, 3)



than what is allowed or seen by the virtual loss of the image of God. The remedy for the loss of the image is so complete that it can handle any of the degraded problems which may be encountered in life.

Christ as the second Adam demonstrates to us the restored image of God. Christ was given a life-giving Spirit while Adam was given a living soul.<sup>72</sup> Calvin wrote of this, "And it is a far greater thing to be Life, or the source of life, than just to have life."<sup>73</sup> Therefore part of the restored image of God is the ability to be life-giving once more. In demonstrating this restored capacity Christ has become life-giving through his resurrection which already makes us possessors of eternal life but which will be fully recognized in an actual resurrection of bodies as well.<sup>74</sup> Christ, demonstrating the restoration, really shows us that the restored image is leading to an even better state than the perfection of the garden. "Christ came to restore our nature from its catastrophic downfall, and raise it up to a better state."<sup>75</sup> In Christ is seen the spiritual as well as natural image of God once more. And this restored image comes to the

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<sup>72</sup>I Corinthians 14:45.

<sup>73</sup>Calvin, Commentary on I Corinthians, 338, 14:45.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 339.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

believer in the form of the Spirit of Christ which is the Holy Spirit. The believer, therefore, may begin once more to demonstrate some capacity for reflecting the original gifts of the particular image of God. "Christ. . . has brought us the Spirit who is Life."<sup>76</sup>

The understanding of the restored image as found in Christ may illegitimately be only a theological concept as we see it described in the Bible itself. However this is not the limit of our understanding; for the Spirit of Christ dwells in the church, and it is here that we see most clearly today what it means to become a life-giving force once more. It is the church that demonstrates most clearly in the world what the restoration should be. To understand the functioning of the church necessitates a brief discussion of how the Holy Spirit works with individuals who must constitute this church.

Humanity's understanding of the image begins with the reflections of the believers. For ". . . it is by contemplating what happens in our regeneration that we see what the image of God must originally have been like."<sup>77</sup> It is only after the regenerated person understands and experiences the regeneration that this person will then be able to see more clearly the image of God in the creation. The imprint of the image will be more visible or interpretable to the

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Wallace, 105.

believer than to the unbeliever, or to the regenerate person rather than the unregenerate person. When Calvin looks at the creation or looks at the original state of humanity he does so with the eyes of faith.

It is on this basis that Calvin finds that for Adam to have been made in the image of God meant that he should live in an ordered integrity and righteousness, in dependence on the grace of his Creator, rising ever into communion with God through the Word of God which his mind was made to reflect and through the glory of created things mediating on the heavenly life, and living in a truly ordered relation to his fellow creatures and environment.<sup>78</sup>

Clearly order, or the re-establishment of rectitude, is an important concept for Calvin. It is the demonstration or renewal of order in life that is one of the positive effects of the image of God being renewed. Given the fact that order is important and desirable and that the restoration opens the eyes of the regenerated so that they may see more clearly, the question remains -- How does the restoration take place? To understand this means one must understand the function of the Spirit of God in a person's life (at least as far as one is able).

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to draw us to seek Christ who is the basis for the renewal of the image of God. "We must be drawn by the Spirit to be aroused to seek Christ."<sup>79</sup> It is the Holy

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Institutes, 544 (III, 2, 1)

Spirit which works (unobserved from outward observation) in our hearts and unites us to the person of Christ as the basis for the restoration of the image. This uniting for Calvin is most often to be viewed not as a coming down of the Holy Spirit to us as much as the Holy Spirit raising us up to a vision of heavenly things. In this way the accomodation of the Spirit in working within us really is for the purpose of elevating us from our original status. Wallace says of Calvin, "He seems to prefer to speak of the Holy Spirit as raising men up from the earth to heaven, there to dwell with Christ and there to partake of Christ."<sup>80</sup> The function of the Spirit is always to direct us to Christ and to live with Christ. This directing of us toward Christ is for the purpose of enabling us to conform our lives to the excellence of the example of Christ. This conforming can only occur because the objective work of Christ is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.

The fact that once for all we have been wholly sanctified in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, unfolds its true significance not only in our justification and acceptance with God, but also in the gradual impartation to us through the Spirit of the actual holiness which dwelt in Christ.<sup>81</sup>

The conforming, or "gradual impartation", is to be emphasized as

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<sup>80</sup>Wallace, 20.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 14.

occurring "by the grace and virtue of the Spirit."<sup>82</sup> and is totally divorced from any sort of "an influx of substance" from Christ Himself or from God the Father.<sup>83</sup> It is not the substance of Christ Himself that is given but "everything that has been given to Christ in His sanctification is given for the very purpose of being communicated and imparted to the Church by the Spirit."<sup>84</sup>

The inward working of the Holy Spirit remains a work of God and a mystery to humanity. It is only the effects and results that can be seen from the outside. The results are that "the knowledge of all that is most excellent in human life is said to be communicated to us through the Spirit of God."<sup>85</sup> That this knowledge is to be interpreted as more than just cognitive is seen when Calvin speaks of the practical outcomes of this knowledge which is given by the Spirit. He writes the following in the context of discussing the relationship of the sciences to theology.

If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem, we condemn and

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<sup>82</sup>Torrance, 56.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Wallace, 16.

<sup>85</sup>Institutes, 275 (II, 2, 16)

reproach the Spirit himself.<sup>86</sup>

At this point we see that the Spirit is involved in more than just the sanctification of the individual. The creation is also involved. "The work of the Spirit in our hearts is to begin to reform us to the image of God with a view to the complete restoration of that image both in ourselves and in the whole world."<sup>87</sup>

Some comment should still be made concerning the relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and the conception of concupiscence in Calvin. It has earlier been noted that Calvin considered even the unlawful desires themselves to be sin rather than only as temptations to sin. This idea of the desires themselves being sinful must not be interpreted to mean that all desires are sinful. The natural desires are sinful only when unrestrained. The restraint is a function of the Holy Spirit.

Because of the connexion which the Holy Spirit has with the death and self denial of Christ Calvin frequently speaks of the office of the Spirit in His work in the human heart as that of restraining natural desires, subduing unruly passions, enabling men to deny themselves and the world in conformity with the death of Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Calvin makes this idea specific in a reference to a prayer of David.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 273-274 (II, 2, 15)

<sup>87</sup>Wallace, 107.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 66-67.

In commenting on Psalm 109:5 Calvin notes that David did not react with vengeance toward his enemies but laid the matter before God's tribunal. In reference to how this action of self-denial was even possible for David (or is possible for us) at this point Calvin wrote that "The Holy Spirit, however, restrains us, so that though oftentimes provoked by the cruelty of our enemies to seek revenge, we yet abandon all fraudulent and violent means, and betake ourselves by prayer to God alone."<sup>89</sup> Strife causes disharmony but "The Holy Spirit is the 'Spirit of continence' who so restrains the licentious desires of the flesh that men spontaneously bring their own lives into order."<sup>90</sup> Thus the Holy Spirit is responsible for the re-introduction of rectitude.

The restraint that the Christian places upon the desires is not of a nature which leaves the Christian unfeeling or Stoic. Rather, the Christian is really the only person that becomes what a human was created to be. Wallace notes that:

The most important difference between the attitude of the Christian in moderating his life and behavior and that of the Stoic is that the Christian man allows suffering to enter his heart. He allows his feelings to be touched and moved to real response by his surroundings and circumstances, even though he is to be watchful in moderating the extent to which, and direction in which, his feelings

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<sup>89</sup> Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, 272, 109:5.

<sup>90</sup> Wallace, 190. His source is Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, 23:5.

drive him.<sup>91</sup>

Not only does the Christian let suffering reach to the heart, the Christian experiences a renewing of the emotional character so that the fallen nature is restored. "It is to be noted that the effect of the Spirit of God is to make men again truly natural, not only in the fact that they become truly human in their feelings but also truly moderate."<sup>92</sup> The transformation of the emotional life, enabled by the Spirit, is expressed by Calvin as he related the sorrows of life with the joys of the service of God.

For Scripture praises the saints for their forbearance when, so afflicted with harsh misfortune, they do not break or fall; so stabbed with bitterness, they are at the same time flooded with spiritual joy; so pressed by apprehension, they recover their breath, revived by God's consolation.<sup>93</sup>

It is seen that Calvin was not advocating that a person should be without emotion after the Holy Spirit had been operative in that person's life. Rather, the person who experiences the work of the Holy Spirit through a mysterious internal process begins to display a true humanity. To display true humanity is really no more than to

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 191. Cf. Institutes, 709 (III, 8, 9) Here Calvin directly addresses the issue of the emotional life of the Christian person as opposed to the Stoic conceptions.

<sup>92</sup>Wallace, 192.

<sup>93</sup>Institutes, 710 (III, 810)



begin to display the true character of God since true humanity mirrors God. Concerning the feelings of true humanity Calvin wrote, "Let us indeed know that the feelings, which God has placed in human nature, are in themselves no more corrupt than the Author Himself . . . ."94

The people who have now experienced the work of the Holy Spirit beginning to transform them into the character of Christ form the church. It is this church that must clearly demonstrate the restoration of the image of God to society since it is the church that is the body of Christ. But we must not expect the church to be pure or perfect in our world since we live in an "already-not yet" situation. The church has experienced renewal but is still caught in the imperfections of this world. It has been given a new nature and vision but is still caught in the old nature and its desires. In the interim between Christ's first and second coming this must be as the church works out its mission in the world; but in the end of time the fullness of perfection will be granted the church as the bride of Christ. It is now perfect before God because it is seen through the redemptive work of Christ. In the end it will be objectively made perfect as well.

One of the main ways in which Christ was said to demonstrate

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<sup>94</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Book of Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 228, 8:2.

a restoration of the image of God was the life-giving capacity which he had. The church now demonstrates this life-giving capacity as well because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Calvin recognizes this living or organistic nature of the church and continually uses metaphors which display the church as a developing organism: conceived, born, infancy, youth, etc.<sup>95</sup> The church is specifically established, in Calvin's view, for the purpose of bringing about the restoration of the divine nature in the world. This was begun in the times of the Old Testament through the covenant that God made with Adam and later Noah and Abraham.<sup>96</sup> Those included in the covenant were the beginnings of the church which after Christ comes to be the Christian church working still under the guidance of the Spirit.

The ministry of the church is now to be concerned with the restoration of the image of God in both the world and human society. The church, therefore, has a responsibility to lead society in all areas: ecological, spiritual, educational, and every other sphere. Since the church is called by Christ and the minister is called to lead this earthly manifestation of the church under Christ's leadership, the minister has, therefore, an important role. But the role is to be

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<sup>95</sup>B. Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church (Leiden: Brill, 1970) 7.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, note especially the discussion in chapter two.

utilized for preparing the church members for service themselves. The elders, therefore, become important in working with the minister, and the people of the church become important in encouraging each other and working among themselves. In the church a beginning of the new restored order is seen. Although there is a hierarchical order in the church as regards responsibilities, Milner notes a significant difference in Calvin regarding the equality of members:

The unity of the body of Christ, however, may be derived not only from the Head to whom it is bound, but also from the Spirit by whom it is bound:

By the Spirit of sanctification God spreads himself through all the members of the church, embraces all in his government, and dwells in all; but God is not inconsistent with himself, and therefore we cannot but be united with him in one body.<sup>97</sup>

Here we may detect a slightly different emphasis, viz., a unity which moves horizontally among the members rather than vertically toward the Head; and that is owing to the fact that Calvin has in mind something other than our ingrafting by the Spirit into the body of Christ. Now he thinks, rather, of the "variety" and "perfection" of "gifts" which have been "poured forth in full abundance" upon the church.<sup>98</sup>

The members of the church of Christ are now all equal before the sight of God insofar as their status before Him in Jesus Christ is concerned. They all have different gifts and abilities, however, which must be used and may be unequally distributed. The new order

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<sup>97</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 4:6; note also Ibid., 2:21.

<sup>98</sup>Milner, 182.

of the church should show that it can use all of the various gifts which God has bestowed upon the church for the good of not only the church but also society. The church is involved in relationships of the members to each other but also in relationship to the world in all of its manifestations. To be the church, then, as responsible for displaying the renewed image of God, has ethical implications which cannot be taken lightly.

It is possible for a person to deny any relationship with another person and still be a member of the human race, but "The binding of the Christian with Christ through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as that it is simultaneously a binding of the members with each other, means that 'we cannot be Christians without being brothers.'"<sup>99</sup> So there is a responsibility to those in the church to love one another. This possibility does not depend upon ourselves alone, however, since it is the Spirit of God that enables us to fulfill the requirements of love.<sup>100</sup>

As love is the word best suited to describe the feeling and attitude of the members of the body toward each other, so Calvin employs the term *συμπαθεια* to characterize the feeling and attitude of the member toward the body as a whole. By *συμπαθεια* he means an identification of the member with the body so complete that whatever happens to the church will have the same effect as if it

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>100</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of St. John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 4:12.

had happened to him alone.<sup>101</sup>

This love and "sympathy" are gifts that must be demonstrated by all Christians and have the effect of allowing the church to display a natural harmony which is part of demonstrating the image of God.<sup>102</sup> When this natural harmony is disrupted, for we do still live in a fallen world, it is necessary to proceed out of love and institute discipline designed to bring a church member back into proper relationship with Christ and the church. Calvin is sometimes believed to have expelled people in discipline with the purpose of communicating that they were not a part of the church called by God. This is not the intention of Calvin as regards discipline. Calvin wrote, "It is, therefore, not our task to erase from the number of the elect those who have been expelled from the church, or to despair as if they were already lost. . . . Nor should we on this account cease to call upon God in their behalf."<sup>103</sup> Rather, discipline must be an action of love and sympathy. Furthermore, it should be known as such by the recipient of the discipline; for only then can it be most

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<sup>101</sup>Milner, 185. Cf. also J. Calvin, Commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 11:29; and J. Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 22:4.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>103</sup>Institutes, 1237 (IV, 12, 9)

effective.

Life-giving relationships within the church are a part of the demonstration of the restored image of God and another part is the relationship of the church to the world as a life-giving force. Calvin addressed issues of importance in his society such as unemployment, inflation, adequate salaries, education and citizenship.<sup>104</sup> Some of his work in these areas will be seen in the subsequent chapter, but what is of note here is that the reasons for his work were directly related to his conception of the responsibilities of the church in relationship to the image of God being displayed. The one issue which will be discussed theologically here, the practical outworkings being followed up in the next chapter, is the nature of the relationship between men and women. This is not only an important issue of discussion in our society but has also been seen to be a focal point in several ways for Calvin. There is a reflection of Christ and the church displayed in the marriage relationship, and the image of God is closely related to both institutions. Christ has been seen to be the basis for a new order displayed in the church which then affects society. How this new order is then reflected in marriage is a parallel question in many ways.

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<sup>104</sup>This is the topic of Bieler's book, The Social Humanism of Calvin (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964)

A passage that clearly speaks to husbands and wives in the New Testament is that of Ephesians 5:21-28. Calvin's position in understanding this passage serves as a start in understanding how he uses Biblical theology as a basis for his systematic theology.

He first of all notes the phrase calling for mutual subjection to one another. This he interprets as referring to all of us in all relationships including the marriage relationship.<sup>105</sup> The following verses then describe various relationships within the bond of mutual subjection before Christ. Here Calvin sees that the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the head of the church. But this is not a headship in a manner that society, or even very often the church, defines it. Rather, the headship is described by the principle of "Husbands, love your wives." This, said Calvin, "should be no ordinary love."<sup>106</sup> The type of love demonstrated by Christ was a love that died for the church. Certainly the church did not have to suffer under the heavy hand of Christ. The church found its' deliverance under Christ. The husband, furthermore, is to love his wife as himself. This implies and exhorts a oneness.

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<sup>105</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Ephesians, 204-211, 5:21-28; The discussion of the paragraph contained on this page is a summary of the designated pages from the commentary.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 205.

Both Paul and Calvin here exhort men not to treat their wives as something outside of themselves to be controlled or used but as integral parts of a relationship of oneness which prohibits the using of a person. The language describes the husband pouring himself into the wife for the sake of the relationship rather than the reverse which is a more common understanding. In this way the husband truly loves. The responsibility of the wife in turn is to reverence her husband which "will make them submissive."<sup>107</sup>

Clearly Calvin does not support a modern concept of equality. What is more the issue for him is the assigned positions to men and women given by God. The gifts of men, or women, or rulers, or peasants are to be used within their God-given positions in life. The peasant, therefore, may be more brilliant than the ruler of the country, but the peasant is a peasant and the ruler is a ruler, and they must use their gifts as best they can. If they belong to the church they will use them in cooperation. In the same way the wife may have more gifts in general than her husband but he is still the head and she is still subject to him; although in a Christian marriage they become one so that the gifts are used together without claiming credit for either one individually. The headship principle seems to come down to the husband being responsible to use his abilities to

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 211.



build this type of relationship. Nevertheless the wife as a helper also can contribute her efforts in this regard. The explanations of Calvin are summed up succinctly by Douglass:

Calvin in commenting on Ephesians 5:22-33 clearly does not mitigate the requirements for wives to subject themselves humbly to their husbands. Yet he emphasizes here as elsewhere that Christians are to be subject to one another, men as well as women. The husband's authority is "more that of a society than of a kingdom." He is not to oppress his wife.<sup>108</sup>

Marriage was theologically re-interpreted during the reformation and, therefore, became liberating for protestant women. There was still, however, the issue of the relationship between men and women in general. Concerning the latter issue, we find that the thought of Calvin followed the customs of his society. This, he believed, was scriptural.

Calvin believed that women were not to have authority over a man in accordance with I Timothy 2:12. "The reason that women are prevented from teaching is that it is not compatible with their status, which is to be subject to men, whereas to teach implies superior authority and status."<sup>109</sup> The subjection is seen by Calvin as a

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<sup>108</sup>J. Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation", in R. Reuther (ed.), Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974) 299.

<sup>109</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 217, 2:12.

punishment inflicted on women from the time of the fall and also as an original order of creation. Before the fall the place of women had been one of "liberal and gentle subjection" but after the fall she was "cast into servitude."<sup>110</sup> Clearly the restoration which is brought in Jesus Christ must once again seek to remove the servitude which is a result of the fall. But the concept of subjection still remains. The basis goes back to the creation itself. "Thus, since God did not create two 'heads' of equal standing, but added to the man a lesser helpmeet, the apostle is right to remind us of the order of their creating in which God's eternal and inviolable appointment is clearly displayed."<sup>111</sup> What Calvin has not done here is to undertake an examination of the meanings of helpmeet or headship. These were not his questions.

The theology of Calvin was a beginning of a more positive view of women and their function in society. Whether Calvin's beginnings lead to a credible feminist theology for the twentieth century is a question that needs to be address by someone working in that particular area; however, a scholar concerned with the modern position of women will experience hindrance unless the preliminary steps of

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<sup>110</sup>Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 172, 3:16.

<sup>111</sup>Calvin, Commentary on I Timothy, 218, 2:13.

Calvin and the boundaries he used in taking those steps are a part of the study done.

The important aspects of Calvin's conception of human nature have now been presented. From this overview several concepts have been highlighted as important. First of all, the image of God in humanity has been seen to be an objective and unremovable basis for the value and worth of every individual. It was in the creation of the human race that "God uttered His Word to the full."<sup>112</sup> Humanity has been created for a relationship with God; God views the individuals of his creation as his children (an objective basis) and individuals come in gratitude to God recognizing a filial relation (subjective basis).<sup>113</sup> Even though not all people may approach God with gratitude, recognizing a filial relation, it is nonetheless true that all people still participate in reflecting God's image as his created children. Thus, due to this objective basis of the image, all people must be treated with a respect due to God's image-bearers and should be further encouraged to recognize their filial relation to God.

It is true that the objective image no longer is purely seen. It is, nevertheless, still a basis for treating people with due respect;

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<sup>112</sup>Torrance, 77; he quotes Calvin, Sermons from Job, 10:7.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

for even after the image has been obliterated by the fall, it is still present as a remnant. Calvin wrote, "So we see even in the most wicked and depraved there is some impression of the image of God."<sup>114</sup> Even this presence is due to the grace of God and not because of our own nature. For the image is "not what God puts into us by nature, but what He puts into us by grace."<sup>115</sup>

Secondly, the fall of humanity brought with it a loss of order and harmony in the creation. The restoration of the image, which takes place through the work of Jesus Christ, begins to restore the lost rectitude. This restoration, however, takes place only in the hearts of those people who experience the mysterious internal working of the Holy Spirit. The transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit brings the individual into a closer representation of the image of God and also brings an ability of a renewed recognition of the image of God. The beginning of a restoration of rectitude in the creation means a re-evaluation of humanity by those being renewed. They begin seeing the work and face of God in others. Calvin wrote, "The man who has a true respect and reverence towards God will

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<sup>114</sup>Calvin, The Deity of Christ, 33.

<sup>115</sup>Torrance, 81-82; his quote from Calvin, Sermons on Job, 10:7.

beware of being insulting towards people."<sup>116</sup>

Thirdly, in Calvin's conception of human nature there is the central concept of the mirroring of the image. "There is no doubt that Calvin always thinks of the imago in terms of a mirror. Only while the mirror actually reflects an object does it have the image of that object."<sup>117</sup> It is the Holy Spirit that enables a person to begin to reflect more clearly the image of God. This means that the Holy Spirit uses in polishing this reflection is the Word of God -- the Word being Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scripture. "Where the thought is of the mirroring of God, properly speaking the mirror is always the Word."<sup>118</sup> For Calvin the scriptures play a very crucial part in the way that a person will come to reflect the divine image. The scriptures need not be communicated directly by printed page to a recipient, but the communication leading to a clearer reflection of the image will find its basis in the Word. Calvin sums up the matter this way:

. . .the Word itself, however it be imparted to us, is like a mirror in which faith may contemplate God. Whether, therefore, God makes use of man's help in this or works by his own power alone,

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<sup>116</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of James (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 292, 3:9.

<sup>117</sup>Torrance, 36.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, 36-37.

he always represents himself through his Word to those whom he wills to draw to himself.<sup>119</sup>

The restoration of the image of God finds its clearest expression in Jesus Christ and in the church as the body of Jesus Christ. In the church the transformation of relationships and the restoration of order is seen. The church functions as a new life-giving entity in our social order.

In relation to the position of men and women the church also leads the society in demonstrating a new relationship between husband and wife. The new relationship recaptures the gentle relationship of subjection that existed in the original perfect state rather than holding to a forced servitude. The original order is superior to the order demonstrated by the society at large. Calvin does not, however, speak extensively about the relationship of men and women outside of the marriage relationship. This is consistent with the Reformation emphasis that raised the position of women in relationship to the family and saw their importance in relationship to the family.

In conclusion, some tension should be recognized to exist between Calvin's ideas of the created image, rectitude, and the functioning of the Holy Spirit. The tension is related to the very practical outworkings of his theology. The question which presents itself

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<sup>119</sup>Institutes, 549 (III, 2, 6)

is how far one may work in a re-establishment of rectitude (and therefore toward a clearer reflection of the created image) when the basis for a true establishment of rectitude lies in the secret and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. To force principles of rectitude upon those who have not experienced the work of the Holy Spirit will only be described by others as tyrannical. Thus, in Calvin's theology we see a clear division needed between the church and the world. It is when there is difficulty in making this distinction that charges of tyranny may begin to develop. To envision this issue more clearly requires an historical study of Calvin's own ministry.

## Chapter III

## THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF CALVIN

The previous chapter has summarized the anthropological views of Calvin. The subsequent purpose of this chapter is to examine the effect of these views upon Calvin's pastoral ministry by an examination of his letters and sermons. The letters and sermons are sources of pastoral material long overlooked and this may have contributed to ideas that Calvin lacked pastoral sensitivity.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not one agrees with Calvin's methods of pastoral ministry, the judgment of insensitivity certainly is erroneous. Although Calvin was very harsh at times and likely not an easy person with whom to live, there is also a side of him that may be described as "a warm, human person who had many close friends, enjoyed a good joke and liked to relax in the country."<sup>2</sup>

It is necessary at the outset to sketch a general historical context for Calvin's ministry, since knowledge of Geneva and the sixteenth century necessarily affects one's judgment on the effectiveness and appropriateness of developments in the pastoral ministry

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<sup>1</sup>R. Collins, Calvin and the Libertines of Geneva (Toronto: Clarke/Irwin, 1968) ix.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



and theology of that time. This knowledge also enables us to delineate the pastoral principles of use in our own age.

Geneva was an independent city that was the scene of political and religious revolutions before Calvin arrived.<sup>3</sup> It has been said that "no city in Christendom had had a more eventful or stormier history than Geneva during the generation and especially during the decade preceding Calvin's coming."<sup>4</sup> It was not to a calm and unified city that Calvin brought his ministry but rather to one that was very polarized. This polarization in Geneva may have made the city a more difficult location for the "development of a movement predominantly religious in character;"<sup>5</sup> but the polarization also may have contributed to the possibility of the movement taking place at all.

An understanding of the events in the years immediately preceding Calvin's coming will be useful.<sup>6</sup> Geneva was theoretically governed by a bishop but was actually under the control of the Duke of

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<sup>3</sup>J. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) 132ff.

<sup>4</sup>W. Walker, John Calvin (New York: Schocken, 1969) 159. Cf. H. Foster, "Geneva before Calvin", American Historical Review, VIII (1903) 217-240.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Unless footnoted the subsequent pages of historical material have been drawn from W. Graham, The Constructive Revolutionary (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971) 31ff.

Savoy from the Middle Ages to the time of Calvin. In 1504, approximately thirty years before Calvin entered Geneva, Duke Charles III began to rule. His rule immediately caused complaints by the populace. First, he persuaded the Pope to appoint a relative as bishop against the wishes of the Genevan people who supported someone else. Then the new bishop wanted to take over the juridical power in criminal cases in the city, a lucrative position held by the city council. The Duke continued claiming more power and executed a leader in the community, Philibert Berthelier, who supported an alliance with the Swiss cities of Fribourg and Berne against the Duke. At this time the bishop of Geneva died and the Duke usurped the power of this position. When an episcopal judge protested the Duke usurping the bishop's power, Charles also had the judge executed.

Believing that his hold on Geneva was secure, Duke Charles left the city. The citizens immediately sought to make protective alliances once more.<sup>7</sup> These citizens, who succeeded in establishing alliances with Berne and Fribourg, were called Eidgenots. The bishop, who had been later appointed and supported the Duke, fled the city with his supporters who were called, derisively, Mamelukes. (The term normally is used for converts to Islam.) The city then

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<sup>7</sup>Walker, 166-167.

declared its independence. Supporters of the Duke now waylaid the supply routes to Geneva and the city suffered from what was effectively a partial siege. The Duke, however, did not attack the city because of his fear of the alliance that had been formed. Berne had become a protestant city and was now making its' influence felt.

During the time of these events, which lasted into the decade past 1530, the religious situation began to change. Due largely to the animosity felt toward the bishop, who was a Roman Catholic considered to be a political pawn of the Duke, the city was opened in measure to the preaching of the message of Protestantism. Into this time of turmoil came the bold and fiery reformer, William Farel.<sup>8</sup> It was Farel who would four years later convince Calvin to remain in Geneva and then become his life-long friend.

Farel was not a moderate man and physically took over one church after another by holding protestant services in them. By 1535, he had taken over most of the churches in Geneva. At this time the city council in order to retain public order declared the mass suspended and the office of bishop to be vacant.<sup>9</sup> In effect, the power of the office of bishop in ecclesiastical affairs was taken over by the city government. It was this power which Calvin would later con-

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 174-177.

front for much of his career by questioning the limits of its' authority.

The political situation was still unstable as Geneva continued to experience the effects of the siege. Geneva, therefore, appealed for help to France since it seemed that Berne was reluctant to attack the Duke. (The alliance with Fribourg had been broken when the bishop's office was declared vacant as Fribourg was a Roman Catholic city.) Berne feared that Geneva might come under French control if aided by the French and therefore attacked Duke Charles themselves and then were later aided by the French.<sup>10</sup> Duke Charles was reduced to helplessness and the seige of Geneva was over.

The religious situation during these years was one of confusion. Many of the people of the city were committed to the Catholic church and did not wish to see protestant ideas enter the city. In 1535, a woman was executed for trying to poison the protestant ministers; an attempt which almost cost the life of Viret, who was to be a trusted friend of Calvin.<sup>11</sup> It was believed by many that the Catholic clergy were behind this attempt, which in the end probably only strengthened the cause of the Reformers.

The city council now began to support the movement toward the protestant reforms politically.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 173.

A set of severe regulations was adopted (28 February 1536)<sup>12</sup> governing dress, drink, games, and church attendance. Geneva had been accustomed to sumptuary laws and government directives but it had not always obeyed these. Its people were given to pleasure and (says a French critic of the Reformers) 'had a fondness for cabaret life.' In accepting the Reformation they can hardly have realized what a transformation of conduct would be entailed by their choice.<sup>13</sup>

Only tow months after the adoption of these laws and in the ferment of the times, Calvin came to Geneva.

Calvin's first stay in Geneva was not long. The citizens were not of a mind to ascribe to the regulations and furthermore refused to subscribe to a Confession of Faith which Calvin and Farel presented to the council. Therefore the preachers announced to the city council that they wished to refuse communion to those who would not sign the Confession. The council denied permission for this and furthermore ordered that communion be held according to Bernese practice at the coming Easter service. Calvin and Farel preached on Easter but refused to hold a communion service under the circumstances. The governing bodies of the city met, therefore, and all agreed that they had no need for these preachers. Calvin, Farel, and a fellow

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<sup>12</sup>The quoted date is in conflict with the Register of the city council of Geneva and other studies such as: Graham, 35; Collins, 94; Walker, 179; and the Calvini Opera, XXI, 201f. These studies give the date as May 21, 1536.

<sup>13</sup>McNeill, 132ff.

preacher named Coraunt were ordered out of the city within three days. The year was 1538. Calvin's first stay had been only two years.

During the next three years (which Calvin spent at Strasbourg) the political climate at Geneva changed. Due to an unsatisfactory treaty made with Berne and also because there was a demoralized church without leadership, Calvin was recalled to Geneva in 1541. The rest of his life and career was to be spent in ministry to this city.

Some general information should be added in order that the situation of Geneva as it existed in the sixteenth century itself may be understood. Geneva had been a major traderoute through Europe for centuries.<sup>14</sup> However with the discovery of the 'new world' the traderoutes began to change. Geneva was left, therefore, with the problems of inflation and declining commercial trade. In this situation Calvin would alter function in arranging for more jobs and new industry. However the problems were compounded by the religious situation. France for many years had been persecuting the protestant church. Geneva, therefore, became a refuge for those oppressed and fleeing France. Thus, the commerce of the city was faced with new challenges because of changing traderoutes while a tremendous growth

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<sup>14</sup>The material of this paragraph may be found in more detail in Collins, 60ff.

in population was experienced.<sup>15</sup> The city, the church, and therefore Calvin, were directly confronted with questions of how the church must function effectively in the social sphere.

It is significant in Calvin's time that the church and state were not separate and that repression of a non-conforming church was common. A change of government from Catholic to Protestant (made if a change came in the religion of those ruling, often meant persecution for the religious party out of favor. In this context it became important for religious leaders to be involved in politics not only for the safety of their own lives but also for the safety of the lives in their congregations. The concepts of law and order as they exist in western twentieth-century culture are inapplicable to the times of the reformers.

Given the situation of religious oppression in the sixteenth century, it is notable that reformers came forth to lead and bring reforms to society and the church. Concern for personal safety would almost certainly demand that they remain as unknowns. If, however, a reformer did step forward, or was shoved forward as was

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<sup>15</sup> Because of the refugees coming into Geneva due to religious persecution elsewhere, the population has been estimated to have increased by thirty per cent between 1542 and 1560 (10,400 to 15,376) by Graham, 105.

Calvin,<sup>16</sup> it was a virtual necessity to become involved in law and order, politics, theology, education, and all other spheres of life. Scholarship, life, morality and religion all were melded in a refining fire in a way almost inconceivable to the modern mind. If one's theology was determined to be in serious error, the result might well be death. Such was the case with Servetus and, if the judgment had been reversed, possibly might have been the case with Calvin. Religious disagreements could be personally devastating to the extent that one's life was lost. In this historical framework the apparent intolerance of some leaders, including Calvin, becomes more understandable even if still undesirable to modern people. We must display a measure of tolerance of our own if we are not to judge them more harshly from the background of our social context than they themselves judged from their social context. Evaluation of the Reformers, including Calvin in Geneva, must be tempered by the recognition that they lived in a different age -- a repressive and insecure age by modern standards.

One last aspect of sixteenth-century life worthy of note is the epidemic disease (often the plague) that led to the death of many people while still very young. In these times, old age was not a

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<sup>16</sup>Farel's influence in convincing Calvin to take up the ministry is well-known. Calvin's own account of it can be found in F. Wendel, Calvin (Glasgow: Collins, 1963) 48-49.



primary cause of death and length of life was visibly uncertain. Calvin lost friends, family, and students to the plague. Large segments of the population of Geneva and all of Europe died under its onslaughts. Sudden death was such an ever-present reality that it was only sensible for one to prepare for it as a daily possibility. Living with this constant preoccupation with death along with the political and religious upheaval meant that the populace needed pastoral care that would address these issues. The relevance of Calvin here will be seen only when we consciously keep in mind the needs present in the sixteenth-century.

In order to study Calvin's pastoral ministry, a number of characteristics of this ministry have been identified and are followed by a demonstration of how they function in Calvin's work. Seven general characteristics have been identified for the purposes of this chapter. They are: 1) Calvin's freedom of expression in his work; 2) his explicit portrayal of caring, grief, and emotions in general; 3) his demonstrated beneficence or lack of it; 4) his emphasis on duty, order, and law; 5) his practicality and avoidance of abstraction in advice; 6) his emphasis on the role of gratitude in his counsel; and 7) Calvin's recognition that a new status was needed for women. Although the liberation of women took a secondary role to other issues of that time, it is an issue that commanded a surprising amount of attention for Calvin.

The first characteristic to be considered is Calvin's freedom of expression in his relationships. It will become obvious that Calvin could be very harsh in his actions and reprimands. In order to help us see this in perspective it will be useful to hear Calvin himself as to why he believed he functioned as he did. In order to do this, we must hold two concepts in relationship. The first concept is presented in the following quote:

. . . if I want to warn my neighbor and seek his welfare and (want to show him) that I am not motivated by any sinister intention, but (only want) to procure his salvation to the best of my ability, I can say, "Look at yourself, my unfortunate friend. It appears that you want to sell out to Satan. Is that what you wish, to be captive under this accursed bondage? You clearly demonstrate that you are insane and enraged not to want to receive any admonition of any sort. Do you really have to perish in such a miserable way? Go on, my unhappy wretch, (but) everyone ought to spit in your face." I can say all of that to a man and not hurt him. And why? For that is the only way I can redirect him. When I see that Satan has hardened him to the extent that only great hammer blows can awaken him, I can proceed with such vehemence, which is also why I strive to enumerate his faults. For what is my purpose in exposing (them) except that he might be forgiven by God and no longer be slandered (for them) in the world's eyes.<sup>17</sup>

The above passage shows that the verbal confrontation of Calvin is very harsh at times. His professed reason for harshness is so that the recipient may correct a faulty relationship to God. But why does Calvin desire this correction of relationship? In Calvin's view this

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<sup>17</sup>J. Calvin, Sermons on the Ten Commandments (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 213.

correction would lead to more harmony in relationships and therefore would make life easier; but, this is not his primary consideration.

The primary reason is found in a statement from another context,

"Now what is the purpose of human communication if it isn't our mutual support in charity?"<sup>18</sup> This question presupposes the answer,

"There is no other purpose." Calvin professedly speaks harshly out of love for the other person; and love is expressed best when one is concerned about another's eternal welfare and relationship to God.

That Calvin is concerned about being overly harsh is seen in what he says after the harsh words quoted above.

It hurts me to see people point their finger at such a person, for him to be held in shame by everyone, as on a scaffold exposed to every [form of] ignominy. That pains me, but nevertheless I strive to put him back on the right path.<sup>19</sup>

To speak harshly when necessary, yet always having the principle of love as a guide is an ideal which cannot be followed completely by any one individual, yet it is a principle which Calvin adopts for himself. Its development can be seen as we survey his correspondence with people experiencing different levels of relationship with him.

The letters that have remained of Calvin's correspondence make it clear that he considered it a part of his responsibility to be an

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 216.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 213-214.

advisor and consoler. The reason Calvin kept extensive contacts is seen when he wrote, "And in fact we have need to stir one another up, considering our natural weakness, and the numerous obstacles that retard us in the accomplishment of our duty."<sup>20</sup> Calvin considered human nature to naturally fall away from diligence in regard to the performance of duties, whether religious, familial, or social; and therefore, a person should regard with gratitude the encouragement and promptings given by a fellow believer. Although Calvin certainly did his share of prompting and rebuking, he lived up to his principle in instances when he was challenged by others. Early in his career he wrote to Christopher Libertet, a fellow minister of Neuchatel, in a letter.

Further, word has been brought me by some one, I know not whom, at your request, that you did not entirely approve of some things in my treatise on the Immortality of Souls. So far from being offended because of your opinion, I am greatly delighted with this straightforward plainness. Nor does my perversity reach to such a degree as to allow myself in a freedom of opinion, which I would wish to take away from others.<sup>21</sup>

It is clear that there is room in Calvin for a freedom of expression regarding ideas; but this freedom is to be held within limits. There is a distinction to be made between those who disagree and do not

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<sup>20</sup>J. Calvin, Letters of John Calvin (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858) III, 68.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., I, 43.

hinder the gospel and those who disagree and thereby hinder the gospel. The former are generally treated very well by Calvin, the latter will be seen to fall under a different set of norms for relationship.

To those people Calvin knows or with whom he basically agrees, he is sometimes very blunt. To Farel, his trusted friend, he wrote, "Because I am aware that you are quite accustomed to my rudeness, I will make no excuse for treating you so uncivilly."<sup>22</sup> Yet it is clear that there is real affection between Calvin and Farel, one which grows through the bluntness and straightforwardness. The affection is unthreatened for Calvin because of an underlying commitment which overrides all of the differences of a secondary nature. This is seen in a reply of Calvin to a letter of Farel which shows some of their disagreements.

I pass over in silence the long reply in which you seek to wash away all those points of difference about which I had carefully admonished you. For of what avail is it for us to enter on a controversy? . . . It would certainly not be the last of my wishes that there should be perfect harmony between us. But in whatever way I may hold the firm persuasion of a greater communication of Christ in the Sacraments than you express in words, we will not, on that account, cease to hold the same Christ, and to be one in him. Some day, perhaps, it will be given us to unite in fuller harmony of opinion.<sup>23</sup>

Recognizing Christ as a basis of unity is his ideal; but questions remain as to when there is a common commitment or when it is

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., I, 157.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., I, 162.

lacking. Although Calvin can be very rigorous in his demands on others at times, he can also be openminded and non-condemning. This attitude was not characteristic of the age. The willingness to accept others' opinions or at least not to condemn them is seen in another letter of Calvin to Farel.

I said from the first, what is true, that I mistrusted my own judgment regarding your writings, seeing that our mode of writing is so different. You know with what respect I regard Augustine. Not, however, because I disguise from myself how much his prolixity dissatisfies me. Perhaps my style, in the meantime, is overconceit. But I am not at present discussing which is best. For I have not confidence in myself (to do so), for this reason, that whilst I follow my own inclination, I had rather pardon than condemn others.<sup>24</sup>

It may be argued that Calvin was free to make statements like the above because of his close relationship with Farel. Undoubtedly this is partially true. The expression of acceptance of others, however, was not confined only to Farel. These open emotional expressions and the general acceptance will be seen in the next characteristic to be studied, Calvin's portrayal of emotions; what must be further noted here are the times when Calvin's freedom of expression was used against others rather than for them.

Calvin's most vicious attacks upon others came when he saw ministers doing harm to the church. By virtue of the responsibility of the office of minister, both for himself and others, Calvin felt it

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, 247.

necessary to confront errors in a totally straightforward manner. This principle of Calvin is explained in a letter to the Duchess of Ferrara, a woman who displayed more tolerance than Calvin could understand. He saw only that she might be supporting those who harmed the cause of the gospel. He wrote:

But our Lord does not mean, when we see a wolf, under the colour and appearance of a pastor, scattering his flock, that we should quail in silence through fear of speaking evil of him. He rather commends us to discover the perversity of those who, like the pestilence, corrupt by their infection, and mar the face of the Church.<sup>25</sup>

It is certain that Calvin did not "quail in silence" when he felt it necessary to communicate his disapproval. The message was sometimes given in a manner that can only be described as inconsiderate even by sixteenth century standards.

One demonstration of this was Calvin's reaction to a minister from Thonon who was excommunicated by Neuchatel's church because of his desertion of his charge. This minister, Alexandre, had come to Calvin's house trying to obtain an audience.

Listen to a signal instance of his impudence. Once he ventured to enter our dwelling with the view of obtruding himself upon me in some way or other. When I happened to go down to the lower part of the house, there I caught him with the domestics. He bowed in a very courtly style, and put himself in the gesture of preparation to speak. I condescended to regard him neither by look nor by salutation. Nevertheless, I summoned one of them, of whom I

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., I, 159.

requested that he would desire him to go away, for we did not suffer those to remain on our premises who had been cast out of the Church of God.<sup>26</sup>

Calvin's attitude towards a man whom he believed to be departing from the truth of the gospel can be seen to change as the distance between the views of each increase. One object of Calvin's intolerance is Jerome Bolsec.

Bolsec was a physician, preacher, and poet who attacked some of the doctrines of Calvin, most specifically that of election. The issue first came to a head when Bolsec and Calvin engaged in an impromptu debate when Bolsec stood up in a church service and warned the people against the doctrine of election about which the minister, Jean de Saint Andre, was preaching. Unknown to Bolsec, Calvin was also in the congregation and arose to defend the doctrine. The exchange ended with Bolsec being arrested and imprisoned. Bolsec was consequently exiled from Geneva for his views.<sup>27</sup> Apparently after this incident the rumors were being spread that Calvin desired a more severe punishment for Bolsec. Calvin wrote concerning this:

Jerome has been publicly sentenced to perpetual exile. Certain slanderers have been falsely circulating that we desired a more cruel punishment, and some have been foolish enough to believe it.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., I, 159.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., II, 322-323 footnote.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., II, 334.



At this point it appears that Calvin, while radically disagreeing with Bolsec on this doctrine, was still disposed to consider him a brother in Christ since Bolsec was free to continue preaching elsewhere. If this was not Calvin's view, then either we see a remarkable example of religious tolerance for the sixteenth century or a change of opinion on Calvin's part as time passed; for, a year later, we read the following in a letter of Calvin describing Bolsec, "A person who is more detestable than all the Papists in the world."<sup>29</sup> Given the fact that Calvin had lost friends to the persecution of the Catholic church, the Papists received little affection from Calvin. One wonders whether at this time Bolsec would have been only exiled from Geneva. Nevertheless we see that Calvin spares few words in demonstrating how the relationship stands between himself and another who he believes is hindering the people of God.

A question may naturally arise as to why Calvin finds it so imperative to speak explicitly either in approval or condemnation of other's views. Is it possible just to say nothing and save many of the conflicts that develop otherwise? This is impossible for a true servant of God.

. . . but when the truth of God is trodden down, woe to our

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., II, 383.

cowardice if we permit this to be done without protest. It should not even be tolerated that an innocent man should suffer injury. At this time, both numerous servants of Christ and his doctrine itself are assailed.<sup>30</sup>

One must stand for one's views since avoidance endangers fellow believers. This was clear in the sixteenth century; it is perhaps not so clear in the twentieth century. Also, one must stand firm because refusal to do so is directly linked with one's theology. In Calvin's theology a strong point of connection here is to the image of God. The image of God brings order; those who do not work for the Christian faith support disorder, either actively or passively. This is why Calvin has difficulty supporting those who say they are believers while nevertheless promoting disorder in a society that desperately needs better order.

. . . and those who are not professed enemies of the truth, nevertheless conduct themselves with an impropriety which will create in a short time, unless it be obviated, terrible disorder among us.<sup>31</sup>

Order proceeds from God. Disorder is an effect of the fall and therefore is confronted directly by Calvin. His freedom of expression undoubtedly comes from his own temperament but also from the conviction that explicit expression is necessary to witness to the work of God in the world. These points will be seen more clearly

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., II, 167.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., II, 346.

as the next characteristics are discussed.

The second characteristic which will be examined is Calvin's openness in expressing his feelings such as caring, grief, concern. A stereotype of Calvin is that he was a hard, unyielding person who was very judgmental and seldom smiled. Yet from his letters we find that this is certainly not the case. In fact, when we compare the range of his emotional expression to that which we generally see in our society, we might conclude that Calvin was more transparent and open than most people are today. If one standard of emotional health is judged to be one's awareness of one's emotions then Calvin certainly would be an emotionally healthy person.

The decision for Calvin to return to Geneva from Strasbourg was not an easy one. He desired not to go unless he specifically felt it to be the call of God. On one occasion when the messengers brought him a letter he lost composure to such a degree that he had to stop speaking.

I besought them, however, in every way that I could think of, not to make any account of me in their determination. Whether I was in earnest in making that declaration they understood from what happened, when tears flowed faster than words; so that even twice they so interrupted my discourse, that I was compelled for a season to withdraw.<sup>32</sup>

While it is rare for Calvin to report tears in his letters, there are

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., I, 219.

numerous references to the intensity of his grief in various circumstances. The grief often seems almost overwhelming, and he finds comfort at times in his writing through reporting his reactions. A typical example of this is found when Calvin is writing after the death of a fellow minister, Corrault, who was already advanced in age.

The death, therefore, might not have been totally unexpected.

The death of Corrault has so overwhelmed me, that I can set no bounds to my grief. None of my daily occupations can so avail to engage my mind as that they do not seem to turn upon that one thought. Distress and wretchedness during the day seems only to prepare a lodging for the more painful and excruciating thoughts of the night.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, Calvin was a person who developed close relationships and was not out of touch with his sorrow. He lived with it, experienced it, and more importantly learned how to use it to good advantage in his ministry. He knew how to relate to those who were grieving because he had grieved himself. These experiences formed a part of the basis for his practice of pastoral care. His theological commitments are another part of the basis. The relationship of experience and theology can be seen in Calvin's ministry when he wrote to a father about his son's death due to the plague.<sup>34</sup> It will be instructive to look more closely at this letter in order to see exactly how

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., I, 99-100.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., I, 246ff.

Calvin sought to minister and console.

He began by relating the intensity of his own grief and how he was "somehow upheld before the Lord" although among others he "was almost a nonentity."<sup>35</sup> In this way we find that Calvin identified with the grief of the father and became like him in some manner. Through this, the father was able to read the rest of the letter in a mindset that looked for comfort with a fellow sufferer rather than as a sermon from a dispassionate preacher. This procedure on the part of Calvin was pastorally excellent because the method was not contrived for effectiveness as much as an opening of his life. Calvin went on to speak of the means of comfort which sustained him. These were prayer, private meditations, and the use of the Word.<sup>36</sup> These comforts, however, were presented descriptively, telling what was useful to Calvin, and were not given as command or as magical comforts for the father; rather, Calvin assumed that the father recognized the validity of these means of comfort. But the ministry did not stop here. Calvin then began to speak of the son more explicitly. He did not advise forgetting the past or to proceed as though nothing important had been lost. He spoke realistically. There was a son; he was

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., I, 246.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I, 247.

excellent in many ways; he was not perfect and did have faults; he is undoubtedly with the Lord. Speaking of the son in this way probably was useful to the father. It very likely encouraged the process of grief and prevented it from becoming pathological. Last of all, Calvin appealed to the sovereignty of God when questions arose about the ultimate reasons for the death of this young man. This appeal might cause some difficulty to some modern minds, but in the sixteenth century it was very comforting. In a society that experienced the uncertainties of plague, disease, and persecution, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God very likely was encouraging. A loving sovereign God was always able and willing to work out all things for good.

Calvin's feelings of grief were not confined to personal losses. He also felt grief over the state of the world, the church, and society as a whole. He had enough social awareness so that he could not understand how it was possible for a Christian to overlook this grief.

Furthermore we must grieve, not only for the offenses which unbelievers commit, but knowing well that we are not worthy until all the world is reformed and there is unanimity and harmony in religion, until God is purely worshipped by all; until then we are not worthy of beholding that country. (heaven - DVG)."<sup>37</sup>

This grief proceeded from a conviction that the glory of God is of primary consideration and that love for God turns to sorrow when

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<sup>37</sup>Calvin, Sermons , 40.

one sees God not being truly worshipped in all of life. A love for God that goes beyond oneself flows into love for others because they are made in the image of God. Our own sufferings also become more meaningful when we realize that they are experienced within the context of glorifying God. Calvin expresses this himself:

It matters little what we have to endure in this world, considering the shortness of our life. And if length of days should be granted us, it is well that the Son of God be glorified by our sufferings, and we be participators in his glory.<sup>38</sup>

To envision God's glory and to commit ourselves to that end makes life possible even under the most trying circumstances. To see the glory of God is to see a glimpse of the life that waits for us. Seeing that glimpse enables us to experience already a membership in that future, but already present, Kingdom of God for believers. Thus, Calvin could take suffering and deprivation seriously because he knew that there is always more consolation available than the amount of suffering experienced. In one instance he wrote an Italian lady and advised her to flee from her country due to the persecution in Italy. He did not minimize the difficulty which this advice occasioned for her.

Nor does it escape me how difficult and painful a thing it is for you to emigrate from your country, to live on foreign soil far away from your kinsfolk, at your advanced age not only to change your

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<sup>38</sup>Calvin, Letters, I, 463.

habitation, but forego all those little comforts, of which it were hard and cruel, even in the prime of life, to be deprived. To all this I have but one consideration to oppose, but which, I trust, you will deem amply sufficient. It is this: if we have had a due foretaste of the life which is in heaven, there is nothing upon earth of such importance as to abate our ardour in the pursuit of the heavenly blessing.<sup>39</sup>

Grief is not just something to experience with another person. It is also an occasion for ministry that must begin to fill a void by giving something more that is positive. This is the comfort found in one's faith which must be passed from one believer to another. In speaking of a sufferer Calvin wrote, ". . . the more he is destitute of help or comfort, the more carefully we ought to relieve him."<sup>40</sup> The relief, while a responsibility of all members of the body of Christ, is even more particularly a responsibility of the pastor. The ministry must be concerned with individuals as well as the body of believers as a whole.

"The office of a true and faithful minister is not only publicly to teach the people over whom he is ordained pastor, but as far as may be, to admonish, exhort, rebuke, and console each one in particular." So wrote John Calvin in a section on Visitation of the Sick in his Liturgy.<sup>41</sup>

To speak of Calvin and his concerns only with the grief of

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., II, 452.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., I, 222-223.

<sup>41</sup>J. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper & Row, 1951) 197.



parishoners and their sufferings in life gives a distorted picture. He had a sense of humor that was combined with his sensitivity for others. This lighter side of Calvin is seen at one instance in his need to spare a young messenger any embarrassment. In a letter to Viret, a close friend, he wrote:

Today I have written hurriedly to you and Farel; but because this youth thought that it would not be in his favor if I did not give him a line in writing addressed to yourself, he made me promise that I would do so. I write, therefore, but without having anything to write about. You may pretend, however, that you have received something serious, that you may humour the joke.<sup>42</sup>

The letter shows humour, but it also displays concern over the feelings of another person.

Concern of different nature is shown when Calvin returned to Geneva in 1541 after having been forced to leave only a few years before. In a letter to Myconius after his arrival, he outlined his concern as a minister to people who had earlier forced him to leave. His concern was his ability to reach these people in his ministry, and therefore he felt the need to begin with an attitude of humility. Calvin wrote:

On my arrival, it was in my power to have disconcerted our enemies most triumphantly, entering with full sail among the whole of that tribe who had done the mischief. I have abstained; if I liked, I could daily, not merely with impunity, but with the approval of very many, have used sharp reproof. I forbear; even with

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<sup>42</sup>Calvin, Letters, I, 277.

the most scrupulous care do I avoid everything of the kind, lest even by some slight word I should appear to persecute any individual, much less all of them at once. May the Lord confirm me in this disposition of mind.<sup>43</sup>

In this situation Calvin made an effort to be open to people who had formerly rejected him and possibly might still have had harsh attitudes toward him. This conciliatory spirit of Calvin is displayed at other times even more explicitly.

As a further demonstration of Calvin's conciliatory spirit note his correspondence with Bullinger early in Calvin's career. Bullinger had not answered Calvin's letters, and Calvin was concerned about the lengthy silence possibly indicating a breach of relationship between the two of them. He therefore wrote Bullinger to assure him of the feelings of friendship.

Our friendship, I trust, in virtue of the happy auspices which presided at its commencement, and resting as it does on so solid a foundation, will continue firm and entire to the last. For myself, assuredly, so far as depends upon me, I undertake to persevere in maintaining it firm and unimpaired, because, indeed, I have always very much deferred to you. I have also, as was meet and reasonable, embraced you with singular delight, nor will I ever cease to entertain that affection.<sup>44</sup>

This is the language of open affection even when the affection may possibly not be returned. This indicates an emotional openness on Calvin's part that proceeds from a self-assurance that his value is

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., I, 315.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., I, 113-114.

is not found only in the response of others to him. Accepting his value as an image-bearer of God enabled Calvin to reach out in a manner that otherwise might have been very difficult, if not impossible.

Although Calvin was conciliatory, transparent in his emotional expression, and apparently had many close friendship, he still experienced problems with his temper. He did not hide this fault from his friends but rather shared it through confession with them. When others sometimes stumbled over his temper, it became necessary for Calvin to form a relationship in spite of the problems that his temper created. One instance of this is seen in the following:

When Francis Dryander complained of his uncontrolled anger, Calvin replied that he had been more patient than his correspondent adding: "Still, I take it kindly of you to exhort me to moderation . . . I am perfectly aware that my temper is naturally inclined to be violent. (November 1557)"<sup>45</sup>

From this quote we see two points of note in regard to Calvin's view of his temper. First, he followed his principle stated earlier of being open to the admonitions of others regarding his faults. He considered the admonition or complaint to proceed out of love and concern and not out of a malicious spirit. As such he considered the complaint of Dryander to be a form of ministry to him in helping him to better demonstrate a Christian life. Secondly, he finds his

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<sup>45</sup>McNeill, History and Character, 220-221.

temper to be "naturally inclined to be violent." He believes that the temper is not merely a matter of whim or upbringing but that there are some physiological reasons for the temper being the way it is. This is not, however, an excuse for his behavior. Anger is still a weakness that leads to actions that are not ideal for a truly transformed Christian life. The fact that anger is in some manner natural and yet a sin is seen in the following sentence of Calvin in a letter where he regrets some of his actions. "There I sinned grievously in not having been able to keep within bounds: for so had the bile taken entire possession of my mind, that I poured out bitterness on all sides."<sup>46</sup>

Believing that anger is biological in some manner and yet sinful does not create an insoluble problem for Calvin. For, as seen in the previous chapter, all of creation has fallen, which includes the biological functions of the body. The body, therefore, may contribute biologically to our sinful state and actions. It is only because Calvin saw the forgiveness through Jesus Christ as being so all-encompassing that he felt no need to try and defend his actions as being neutral or not sinful. Rather, recognizing that sin had permeated his life even to this extent only served to make him recognize more fully the extent

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<sup>46</sup>Calvin, Letters, I, 154.

of the saving work of Christ. This recognition in turn stimulated him to greater service in response to this salvation.

The third characteristic to be considered is Calvin's demonstration of beneficence or his lack of it. Already it has been shown how Calvin very unceremoniously dismissed a former minister from his house when he found him waiting to see him. This indicated a clear lack of beneficence on Calvin's part. Yet there are other examples from approximately the same time period in Calvin's life that show another side of him. In one instance a man Calvin refers to as a "vagabond" borrowed some money from Calvin.<sup>47</sup> Later, still not having returned any of the money, he accused Calvin of being a thief of some of his books. When Calvin later called him a scoundrel, the man attacked Calvin in his own house both verbally and physically. At this point the man was taken into custody. Yet, after Calvin had been cheated out of money, slandered and physically attacked, he then went to the magistrate to intercede for the man. Possibly Calvin's beneficence in this case may be attributed to the fact that this man was a vagabond and not a fellow minister or leader in society.

The victims of Calvin's most severe intolerance were generally

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., I, 318ff.

those who were learned and capable of leading other people astray from the truth of the gospel. The best known victims are Gentili, Bolsec, and Servetus. Yet, as has been noted before, intolerance was not uncharacteristic of the sixteenth century as a whole. What is noteworthy in the sixteenth century context are those people who were beneficent and tolerant in their dealings. A part of the Reformation itself was concerned with freeing people from the intolerance of the Roman Catholic dogma. While trying to be tolerant towards people but intolerant towards false and damaging dogmas, Calvin at times became intolerant of the people as well. But this was not his goal. McNeill notes that Calvin's relationship to the Libertines, who were a "thorn in the flesh" for most of his life in Geneva, was unsympathetic with regard to actions, but he still was very capable of persuading some of them to return to the church.<sup>48</sup> This could be done by attacking the actions and beliefs of the Libertines while refraining from attacking them as persons.

It is clear that at times Calvin could be beneficent and at other times he could be very intolerant. The beneficence would seem to correspond with Calvin's emphasis upon the image of God being reflected in all people, therefore all people are to be accorded respect.

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<sup>48</sup> McNeill, History and Character, 169.

"For can we deny before God our common bond with other men, seeing that he has created us in his image?"<sup>49</sup> Yet when Calvin becomes intolérant he seems to forget this principle. It may be that at these times he is operating from his theological conception of rectitude. The primary principle is being ignored for the secondary principle of order. This relationship and how it existed in the sixteenth century will be explored more thoroughly later when we have more material with which to analyze this idea.

The fourth characteristic which will be explored in the letters is that of Calvin's conception of duty, order, laws, and our responsibilities in this sphere of life. This characteristic should directly shed light on the questions raised in the preceding paragraph.

When Calvin considered the responsibilities placed upon himself and others, he emphasized that one had to have a clear conscience before God. God desires to guide the Christian's action; and what the Christian refuses to do in accord with God's desire is an evidence of ingratitude for what God has done for the salvation of the Christian. The benefit of a clear conscience before God was spoken of early in Calvin's career. After his first departure from Geneva, he kept in contact with that church, both encouraging and consoling it. On one occasion he included this reference to himself and to Farel concerning

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<sup>49</sup>Calvin, Sermons, 163.

their expulsion from Geneva:

In so far as we ourselves are concerned, if there is any occasion to argue our case against the ungodly and calumniators who would charge offence upon us, I know that not only is our conscience clear to answer before God, but we have also where withal to purge ourselves before the whole world.<sup>50</sup>

To maintain a clear conscience before God and all people was a responsibility that Calvin kept in mind in all his relationships. It was a part of his duty in his counseling ministry as seen from his letters. His relationship with God was a primary focus for his own self-awareness in counseling, and his counselee's relationship with God was a close second. This emphasis on relationship can be seen in the following lines that he wrote to the church of Geneva later during his time of "exile".

And although my former letters had not been very lovingly received by you, I was nevertheless unwilling to be wanting in my duty, so that, should I have no further success, I would at least deliver my own soul.<sup>51</sup>

The ultimate success of Calvin's exhortations to Geneva may be seen from the fact that he was called back to minister to Geneva, a call that he clearly did not desire. At one point he wrote about his time in Geneva, "The farther I advance the more distinctly do I behold out of what a whirlpool of danger the Lord has delivered me."<sup>52</sup> At

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<sup>50</sup> Calvin, Letters, I, 86.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., I, 144.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., I, 179.



another point he wrote, "Whenever I call to mind the state of wretchedness in which my life was spent when there, how can it be otherwise but that my very soul must shudder when any proposal is made for my return?"<sup>53</sup> The return of Calvin to Geneva was clearly a following of God's call for Calvin; it was not something he would have chosen to do on his own. The duty Calvin saw in the structures of the Christian life were imposed on others; but, also upon himself.

In his actual ministry Calvin was aware that his views and pastoral methods were sometimes seen as overly harsh. We may also have a tendency to see Calvin as harsh. It will be helpful, therefore, to keep in mind a passage which Calvin wrote to Farel in regard to this type of criticism.

I am aware that some people have complained to Viret of my immoderate severity. I know not what his belief is. I scented out the fact, however, that he was afraid lest I should too greatly indulge my ardour. I have requested him to come hither. One in Terence says: If you were here, you would feel differently. I might say the same. If you were in my place, I know not what you would do. But amid a multitude of sorrows, this likewise must be patiently borne. I do not say these things in reply to you or Viret, but to others who idly censure us.<sup>54</sup>

Calvin knew that he was severe in some ways but attributed a measure of it to the circumstances of his ministry. It will be useful to look

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., I, 211.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., II, 153.

further in the letters and determine just how he viewed these circumstances.

Calvin's problems with the Libertines have been noted earlier in the chapter. He was undoubtedly partially referring to these people, but also to others, when he wrote the following:

True it is, that we have many hard-headed and stiff-necked rebels, who on all occasions seek only to raise themselves, and by riotous courses to dissipate and abolish all order in the Church, and these, indeed, as well young as old. And the state of our young people, especially, is very corrupt; so that, when we will not allow them every license, they go from bad to worse.<sup>55</sup>

Again concerning the youth Calvin wrote, "I exercise my severity in dislodging common vices, and principally the sources of corruption among the youth. I conceal all sense of the dangers which good men from several quarters allege to exist, lest I should appear over solicitous about myself."<sup>56</sup> The ministry of bringing about more order in the social structures was so important that Calvin believed the risk of life itself was worth the cost.

Obedience to the civil law was obedience to the powers that God put in authority over us. Calvin clearly subscribed to the Biblical principle that all authority is placed over us by God and therefore must be obeyed. Concerning Romans 13:1 he wrote: ". . . to despise

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., II, 130.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., II, 128.

the providence of the One who is the author of civil government (iuris politici) is to wage war against Him."<sup>57</sup> Even in regard to a rule by a woman, which will be considered more explicitly later, Calvin said that subjects had no right to rebel or be seditious in any way. "Private persons have no right to do anything but deplore it."<sup>58</sup> For Calvin, this meant that the laws of Geneva, if in accord with God's law, were to be obeyed unless they were changed by the proper authorities. To disobey them was not only illegal civilly but also an action that affronted the church, since believers were disobeying the commands of God. Divine law was primary for Calvin as related to the civil law. In a letter to one of his opponents in Geneva, Amy Perrin, Calvin explained his position:

But this I wish to consider, that we cannot enjoy weight for weight with an unequal balance; and if impartiality must be observed in the administration of human law, any departure from it cannot be tolerated in the Church of God. You yourself either know, or at least ought to know, what I am; that, at all events, I am one to whom the law of my heavenly Master is so dear, that the cause of no man on earth will induce me to flinch from maintaining it with a pure conscience.<sup>59</sup>

There was no reconciliation between Calvin and those who would

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<sup>57</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 281, 13:1.

<sup>58</sup>Calvin, Letters, III, 38.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., II, 56.

disregard the laws of Geneva. For Calvin to allow this disregard as a minister meant that he would deny a calling of his office: the restoration of the image of God through re-ordering society as enabled by Jesus Christ. The struggle therefore entered the political realm; either Calvin or the Libertines would eventually have to leave Geneva. Since Calvin lived within the law, in fact desiring better laws, while the Libertines were in power he was able to live in Geneva even though protesting. When parties sympathetic to Calvin came into power, however, and the Libertines were not willing to live within the law, then their fall became certain. A society can exist with dissidents working from within; but if they place themselves outside of the society and seek to change it, either the society as conceived must fall or those outside the law must leave. So believed Calvin as he expressed his views to Farel about the Libertines.

Finally, I added, that a new city must be built for them in which they might live apart, unless they were willing to be restricted by us here under the yoke of Christ; that so long as they were in Geneva they would strive in vain to cast off obedience to the laws. . . .<sup>60</sup>

There were times when something needed to be done about the state of the government, and Calvin recognized this. He wrote letters to important dignitaries of several governments, as a brief overview of his letter will show immediately. He would rather see subjects

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., II, 53.

bear a rule in suffering, depending upon the strength of the Lord, than to react in violence against a government that was ordained by God. Resistance could only be allowed if a ruler persecuted those who spread the message of the gospel. It was necessary in these cases to disregard the law and one's safety at times. This is witnessed by the many Reformed ministers who went into France and were martyred under the persecution there. In all of these events, whether in resistance or compliance, Calvin once more found the sovereignty of God to be the primary focus.

We are still on the lookout for news about the general state of the church. If God intends so sorely to afflict us, as to let that tyrant upon us, who only seeks to ruin everything, we must be quite prepared to suffer. Considering that He who has us in charge, rules in the midst of his enemies, it becomes us to have patience, consoling ourselves in the assured hope, that in the end he will found them.<sup>61</sup>

It may seem that the concept of the sovereignty of God is being used as an escape or even fatalistically. However to think of it this way is to forget the historical circumstances under which Calvin lived. The society was not secure. The threat of persecution and repression was virtually everpresent. The sovereignty of God, therefore, not only provided a point of pastoral comfort, it also provided a way for a person to be consistent in faith, recognizing that the highest priorities in life were not necessarily physical life itself. This recognition

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., II, 113. The tyrant to whom Calvin refers is Charles V.

with which a sixteenth-century person lived was of great value in life. Christian life was truly a life of faith in more ways than we commonly imagine today.

A strong emphasis upon order and duty in the Christian life necessitates dealing with the realities of lack of order and the failure of duty. Calvin faced this problem and advised others who faced the problem. His advice, once more, points a person to the superior reality of God. God orders our life for us; even more, God orders everything for us whether it be in this life or after this life. In other words, there are times when the life of the Christian may be lost, but the presence of God extends beyond this time for the believer. Reality as empirically perceived by any person does not correspond to the actual reality of a person being in the presence of God both during and after life. This actual reality is known only to the eyes of faith; and Calvin would encourage the vision of faith. When people see no outlet or path for problems in life, Calvin directs them to the providence of God for comfort.

Concerning the doubts which may come into your mind, it would be too tedious to reply to them all. But you have always this as a settled point, that we must refer our many anxieties to the Providence of God, trusting that he will provide an outlet in cases where we see none. And in fact it is undoubted, that if we seek him we shall find him. That is to say, he will be with us to guide our steps, and to have a care of our affairs, to order them well for us.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., II, 92.

The outlet in the sixteenth century for some who were persecuted was all too often death. But even this, in God's providence, would lead them to a greater good and joy than they had been able to imagine as well as making them a witness to the Christian faith.

Calvin's emphasis on order, duty, and law seems to be repressive in many instances. We must recall the theological orientation, however, from which this emphasis arises. The Christian willingly strives to fully obey the law because of the gratitude felt for the salvation wrought for believers. It is experienced as no hardship to try and obey the law but rather is experienced as a privilege and opportunity for service. The law is not a means of gaining salvation. The law, also, is not seen as confining but rather is considered to be freeing one to the experience of a more complete and fulfilled life, a life freed from the bondage that is naturally experienced when wrapped in the bonds of sin.

Duty and order do not negate frivolity, as has sometimes been charged against Calvin. Rather, frivolity must be transformed for the Christian just as duty and law have been. Frivolity is acceptable if it also falls within the bounds of service to the glory of God. Calvin, as a student, attended the severe college of Montaigu which was notorious for its rigour and discipline.<sup>63</sup> Against this Calvin reacted

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<sup>63</sup>Collins, 10-11.

when considering rules for the Academy at the time he ministered in Strasbourg.

When it is the rather to be watchfully looked to by us, that the reverence and authority due to the Church may not be wanting, in order to subdue those lewd and mischievous desires; although, nevertheless, I see that some allowance must be made for the folly of mankind; nor ought the rigour of discipline to be stretched so far that they may not play the fool on some occasion.<sup>64</sup>

Calvin sought freedom, but he did not find it to exist outside of Christianity. There only the bondage of sin was experienced. The service of God, rightly ordered, brought freedom in all spheres of life; but it was a freedom with responsibility.

Calvin was a practical person and many of his letters show this emphasis. The fifth characteristic dealing with the practicality of Calvin will show several aspects of his ministry in trying circumstances and the counsel that he was able to give at these times.

Calvin was undoubtedly a great theologian, but his practical interests and concerns show up long before he was known as a theologian or a reformer. While still a student, Calvin wrote a letter to a friend concerning a visit to his friend's sister who was to become a nun. The letter shows evidence of a pastoral interest and sensitivity on the part of Calvin while also showing an emphasis on dependence on God at even this young age.

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<sup>64</sup>Calvin, Letters, I, 170.



I sounded the inclination of your sister, whether she would take that yoke patiently, -- whether she was not rather wearied and drilled into submission, than submitting her neck willingly to the harness. I urged her again and again freely to entrust me with whatever she might have upon her mind. . . . I did not wish to withdraw her from her purpose, because I had not come with that object. But, in few words, I admonished her not to rely too much on her own resolutions, that she ought not to make rash promises as to herself, but rather that she would rest upon the strength of God for all needed help, -- in whom we live and have our being.<sup>65</sup>

Calvin believed that faith in God had to be practical and affect all of life; for it is God "in whom we live and have our being". Later in life Calvin again emphasized in a letter the centrality of our whole life being transformed. He wrote, "God regenerates us by the incorruptible seed of his doctrine, that our whole life may bring forth the fruits of justice corresponding to his holy adoption."<sup>66</sup> The practical interests of Calvin, then, are related to his Christianity because they are an integral part of the life of faith, which is all of life.

The aspects of Calvin's practical tendencies which we will view here are representative and diverse. This will show how the power of God fit into different areas of life for Calvin himself.

When Calvin left Geneva in 1538 he was unmarried. During his three-year stay at Strasbourg, he married Idelette de Bure before returning to Geneva. During this time he wrote to his friends con-

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., I, 27-28.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., II, 450.

cerning his search for a wife. To Farel he wrote:

But always keep in mind what I seek to find in her; for I am none of those insane lovers who embrace also the vices of those they are in love with, where they are smitten of first sight with a fine figure. This only is the beauty which allures me, if she is chaste, if not too nice or fastidious, if economical, if patient, if there is hope that she will be interested about my health. . . .<sup>67</sup>

His concerns were practical. He did not operate with a poor conception of romantic love; he was concerned about her being able to work with him within his financial means; and he was concerned that she might be able to help him with his health which was a perpetual problem for him throughout his life. The woman he married was the widow of an Anabaptist convert of Calvin's, Jean Stordeur, and had a son and a daughter.

Evidently Calvin's marriage to Idelette was a happy one even though they had student boarders and other boarders who did not always get along with each other thereby creating tension in the living situation. Stauffer writes:

In spite of these difficulties the newlyweds were happy. We know this indirectly by means of an account which Calvin gave, in a letter to Farel, of a sickness which attacked him and his wife some six weeks after the wedding. As if reproaching himself for such deep joy in his new life, since others were perhaps at the same time persecuted for their faith, he wrote: "Truly, lest our marriage be too happy, the Lord has from the first moderated

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., I, 141.

our joy so that it might not run beyond itself."<sup>68</sup>

Stauffer continues to trace the signs of Calvin's intimate and working relationship with Idelette through Calvin's correspondence that has survived. It is evident that Idelette helped Calvin in the practical aspects of his ministry such as visiting the sick and caring for them. Given the hints of the quality of this relationship we might wish to know more of the marriage and must agree with Collins:

Calvin's married life has left fewer traces than could be wished in his correspondence; but enough remains to show that husband and wife lived on terms of cordial affection and mutual trust. In character and devotion she was to him all that his ideal of a wife had pictured. To Viret he wrote of her immediately after her death: --

I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, who, if our lot had been harsher, would have been not only the willing sharer of exile and poverty, but even of death. While she lived, she was the faithful helper of my ministry. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance.<sup>69</sup>

It is unfortunate that we have only limited information about Calvin and his relationship to Idelette; but it is notable that his commitment to the glory of God as primary apparently did not hinder his devotion to his wife or the relationship they experienced; rather, it apparently enhanced it.

Mission work was an important part of ministry for Calvin and

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<sup>68</sup>R. Stauffer, The Humanness of John Calvin (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971) 40. He quotes from Calvini Opera, XI, 83.

<sup>69</sup>Collins, 236. He quotes from Calvini Opera, XIII, 230.

many pastors were sent from Geneva to minister in other parts of Europe. The pastors were responsible not only to bring the Word of God to the populace and thereby present the message of salvation, but were also responsible to work in the society for the purpose of its restoration. This meant building up the systems of morality whether they be individual or social and being concerned for the welfare of people through education, health, and all other areas. Given the manner in which nations and people were governed, it was a natural step for the pastor to become a primary force in the community to which the ministry was brought. In writing to a pastor on the Isle of Jersey, Calvin outlines the scope of this kind of ministry.

We praise God for having inclined your heart to try if it will be possible to erect, by your means, a small church on the place where you reside. And indeed according as the agents of the Devil strive by every act of violence to abolish the true religion, extinguish the doctrine of salvation, and exterminate the name of Jesus Christ, it is very just that we should labour on our side to further the progress of the gospel, that by these means, God may be served in purity, and the poor wandering sheep may be put under the protection of the sovereign Pastor to whom every one should be subject.<sup>70</sup>

The sovereignty of the Pastor here was very likely a reference to Christ; however, the leadership of the local pastor was also a very practical matter for Calvin. First of all it was logical that the battle between Satan and the believers should be led by those who are

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<sup>70</sup>Calvin, Letters, II, 453.

best prepared, which should be the pastors. If someone displayed strong spiritual equipment in this battle, it was a call to be used.

Nevertheless, the pastors are not in themselves to be revered.

They are revered only because of God's work through them.

Calvin writes:

But when a puny man risen from the dust speaks in God's name, at this point we best evidence our piety and obedience toward God if we show ourselves teachable toward his minister, although he excels us in nothing.<sup>71</sup>

Secondly, the sovereignty of the pastor, along with the elders, was becoming a point seen as necessary for Calvin because of some of his problems in Geneva. It was a continual point of dissension whether the power of excommunication and church discipline belonged to the church or to the city government.<sup>72</sup> It was Calvin's experience that the consistory, which should be the best qualified in spiritual matters, might bar someone from the sacraments as a part of discipline; these persons then went to the Council of the city and received a fine for breaking the civil law and after that the city Council believed that they should be restored to regular standing in the church once more. Calvin, however, believed that it was the responsibility of the church's consistory to determine whether true repentance had taken place or

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<sup>71</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 1054 (IV, 3, 1)

<sup>72</sup>A summary of information on this issue may be found in Graham, 39ff.

was evidenced before re-admission to the church occurred. This conflict between Calvin and the government, stemming from the city's original takeover of the bishop's powers, led Calvin to envision a freedom of the church in relation to the state in the regulation of cases of discipline. In reality, neither Calvin or the Genevan church experienced this degree of sovereignty. Pictures of Calvin as the dictator of a theocracy do not take into account the historical struggles of Calvin. It was not until 1555, almost twenty years after first entering Geneva, that he succeeded in having the power of excommunication located within the church and not the state. Perhaps the mixture of religion and politics is described by the following quote; it may also indicate how difficult it would be for Calvin to get outside of his cultural situation.

To modern eyes there is a hopeless muddling of civil and ecclesiastical discipline in sixteenth-century Geneva. Most of the sins that required church censure were written into the city's law code. This was in line with the Council's assumption of the rights of the bishop. In earlier days it was the episcopal court which decided civil cases (many of which would require ecclesiastical censure and even excommunication), and the Council tried only serious criminal cases. Now the Council was doing the work of both courts, but was sharing the "moral" cases with the church's Consistory, and the two were squabbling over their mixed jurisdictions.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps it is to Calvin's credit that a solution of some measure was reached during the years that he ministered there. Possibly he

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 40.

learned from the records of the years of struggle between the popes and the Holy Roman emperors over similar issues centuries before.

The practical scope of Calvin's ministry went beyond the doors of his own church. He also was concerned about the society of Geneva and how it cared for the poor, provided education for the youth, had guarantees of consumer protection and adequate salaries of working people. Bieler notes some of Calvin's actions in these areas. In protection of workers and the poor he writes, "To avoid the frequent quarrels about remuneration, Calvin suggests the salary contract. He even thinks of collective contracts and recommends arbitration before the courts."<sup>74</sup> Bieler continues noting salary structures and support of orphans.

In this quest for a just remuneration, the Reformer Calvin, as well as his colleagues in Geneva, has shown an astonishing social activity. Calvin may be seen several times going to authorities in order to obtain from them salary raises for workingmen and teachers. When the City Council votes family allowances to ministers, Calvin demands that the state support the orphans. And in order that the labor of minors be not misused, the council decrees that a patrol will, in the name of the sovereign state of Geneva, see to it that the balance of salaries due to children shall be duly paid to them.<sup>75</sup>

The practical social work of Calvin was not something he did along-

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<sup>74</sup>A. Bieler, The Social Humanism of Calvin (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964) 49.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

side of his ministry. It was a part of his ministry. His ministry was so very practical precisely because he saw the good news of the gospel entering and affecting every area of life.

The last area to be considered in Calvin's practical emphases is his care to those who were facing death in persecution. A time to theologize is not in the face of death. Here the ability to be forthright, practical, and comforting will be of the greatest assistance and sought most diligently. We may begin by observing a quote from a letter that Calvin wrote to the believers in France under the persecution.

I entreat of you, my dear brethren, continue steadfast on your part also; and let no fear alarm you, even although the dangers were more apparent than you have seen them hitherto. May the reliance which God commands us to have in his grace and in his strength always be to you an impregnable fortress; and for the holding fast the assurance of his help, may you be careful to walk in his fear, although, when we have made it our whole study to serve Him, we must always come back to this conclusion, of asking pardon for our shortcomings. And inasmuch as you know well from experience how frail we are, be ever diligent to continue in the practice which you have established, of prayer and hearing of the holy word to exercise you, and to sharpen and confirm you more and more.<sup>76</sup>

When Calvin encouraged those who faced persecution, he usually exhorted them to continue certain aspects of their lives; namely, those aspects connected with the growth in sanctification which begins as soon as one becomes a Christian. This growth comes through study of the Word, prayer, confession and other duties of the Christian

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<sup>76</sup>Calvin, Letters, II, 131.



life. Calvin, however, did not just exhort these persecuted people to continue by the power of their own strength, for the life of sanctification is dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Calvin believed it was the Holy Spirit who would work in the believers through other believers. It was also the Holy Spirit, he believed, who was using him when he wrote his letters. The purpose of the Spirit is not to introduce a mysterious knowledge "but rather to bring man into vital relationship with the knowledge in such a way that his life and person are significantly affected."<sup>77</sup> The Holy Spirit works in people giving them the desire to study the scripture and to encourage one another; then, it also uses this knowledge to transform a weak person into a person of strength, strength that is a part of the power of God in one's life.

We see the above process in more of its completed state in Calvin's letter to five prisoners at Lyons who were facing death and in actuality were later put to death. Calvin was realistic in saying that all hope for their release seemed to be gone. Then he noted that, "This is well, however, that we cannot be frustrated of the hope which we have in him, and in his holy promises."<sup>78</sup> He continued later in

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<sup>77</sup> M. Cubine, "John Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit" (unpublished doctoral dissertation) Northwestern University, 1955, 49.

<sup>78</sup> Calvin, Letters, II, 405.

his letter to encourage them in their source of strength.

You know, however, in what strength you have to fight -- a strength on which all those who trust, shall never be daunted, much less confounded. Even so, my brothers, be confident that you shall be strengthened, according to your need, by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus, so that you shall not faint under the load of temptation, however heavy it be, . . . .<sup>79</sup>

Calvin was aware of the primacy of the Word at this point in the prisoners' lives when he said that he need not console them at greater length because he knew "that our heavenly Father gives you to experience how precious his conclusions are, and that you are sufficiently careful to meditate upon what he sets before you in his Word."<sup>80</sup>

When we look at the results in the lives of the prisoners we find that Calvin's counsel was very effective. In a letter to Calvin from one of the prisoners we find the following report concerning the comfort Calvin had sought to provide.

I cannot express to you the great comfort I have received. . . from the letter which you have sent to my brother Denis Peloquin, who found means to deliver it to one of our brethren who was in a vaulted cell above me, and read it to me aloud, as I could not read it myself, being unable to see anything in my dungeon. I entreat of you, therefore, to persevere in helping us with similar consolation, for it invites us to weep and to pray.<sup>81</sup>

Peloquin, mentioned above, was writing to his friends and relatives comforting them and ministering to them in his time of trial that

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., II, 405-406.      <sup>80</sup>Ibid., II, 406.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., II, 411 in footnote 1.

that would lead to his death.<sup>82</sup> His belief in the goodness and sovereignty of God was not diminished as he suffered for his faith. He shared the belief with Calvin that "we should carry our cross with him[Jesus], for the servant is not greater than the master."<sup>83</sup>

The report of how these men and women at Lyons faced death also testifies to their courage.<sup>84</sup> While the ministry of Calvin cannot be said to have brought about this courage, we may be justified in believing that his counsel was effective in that the prisoners apparently used the same means among themselves; the credit of effectiveness, however, ultimately being attributed to the Holy Spirit's work in their lives.

It would be incorrect to think that the ministry of Calvin in this situation was conceived of by him as being only to comfort and not to intercede in other ways. It is apparent that Calvin made intercession by writing government officials on behalf of the prisoners. Calvin, of course, could not directly tell the prisoners this because the letters were undoubtedly read before the prisoners were allowed to receive them. The evidence we have of Calvin's intercessions are his letters to officials in the English government at this time, encouraging

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., II, 404-405.

them to do anything they can for the cause of the prisoners in France.<sup>85</sup>

That efforts were also being made in the French court by both Calvin and neighboring towns to Geneva can be seen in references in a letter to two merchants living in Lyons.<sup>86</sup> It is clear that Calvin was not a fatalist in regard to persecution but spent efforts at political reforming as well as at comforting those persecuted.

The sixth characteristic of themes in Calvin's sermons and letters is the expression of gratitude through service in life. In many ways this has already been intimated in some of the preceding sections but now will be considered more explicitly. The place of gratitude or service in Calvin's view is summarized very well by Farley:

. . . the Law has three functions. All of these, as outlined by Calvin in the Institutes, appear in the sermons [on the Ten Commandments - DVG]: 1) the Law reveals the righteousness of God while exposing and condemning unrighteousness; 2) it deters malefactors and restrains the unregenerate until the day of their salvation; and 3) it teaches Christians God's will for holy living and exhorts them to meditation and obedience.

In the sermons, it is this third function that dominates. . . . It is the third use that empowers the series [of sermons]. From beginning to end, Calvin's primary purpose is to demonstrate how God's will for everyday life is revealed in the Ten Commandments; and not only revealed, but published to exhort and strengthen man's witness and confirm his life in obedience to God. . . .

Finally, Calvin notes that the law no longer has the power to bind men's consciences with a curse. The Law is still to be

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., II, 393 -- Calvin's letter to Edward VI; 398 -- Calvin's letter to Cranmer.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., II, 396f.

revered and obeyed, but out of a sense of freedom and not despair.<sup>87</sup>

Not to understand the binding character of the Law and its difference for believers and unbelievers is to misinterpret an important aspect of the theology of Calvin. The Law, and obedience to God in general, is seen by unbelievers as an imposition upon their freedom, and because of their blindness it will be experienced this way. However the experience and understanding for the Christian is entirely different. For the Christian the law is a guide that is provided by a gracious God. The Christian strives, therefore, to follow this guide, not from fear of punishment but from a real sense of gratitude because of what Christ has done, and a real desire to be of service for and with Christ in the world.

It is the Christian's response to the law that is ideally the correct response since the Christian responds with a human nature restored to the original intention of God at creation. The choice is to live for God or against God; in service to God or in bondage to Satan. The choice that would obviously be made if we could see clearly is to live for God and avoid bondage. Is there, then, bondage under Christ? Only if we consider it to be bondage that we cannot leave Christ without hopelessly binding ourselves in sin to the service

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<sup>87</sup> Calvin, Sermons, 25-26.

of Satan. To refuse to embrace either of these alternatives is not living in reality and not acknowledging the true character of our existence. The purpose of our existence is summed up by Calvin in a sermon.

If we were well-advised we would not need to be taught to act reverently toward God, for nature ought to bring us to that end. For (after all) what reason are we created in this world? Why do we live here if it isn't for the purpose of paying homage to him from whom we received every good and to apply ourselves to glorify his majesty? That is the end and whole sum of this life.<sup>88</sup>

Recognizing one's state before God's face after God has provided for our salvation is why Calvin did not believe that the believer need be cast down without hope of arising to a recognition of new life in Christ. In feelings of grief, the believer knows that God is still sovereign and that he is still guiding for the good of his own. In times of apparent turmoil in the world, the believer knows that God is still in control and is assured that all will turn out for ultimate good. As we recognize the perversity of our hearts in that we do nothing from pure motives, we still have the confidence and knowledge that God will use us.

Calvin sums up the relationship between the believer realistically seeing fallen humanity and still being able to glorify God.

Consequently, whenever the law of God confounds us, not only

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 81.

because our lusts are without number, but (equally because) we are buried under them as if covered by vast mountains, if God seems to deal with us harshly, let us realize that God does not intend to leave us in despair, but as quickly as we are struck down, he helps us up. When he sees our frailty, he extends us his hand and calls us to himself and wants us to be comforted, insofar as by his loving kindness our sins are not counted against us. That is why believers do not cease to glorify in (him), although they stand condemned in themselves.<sup>89</sup>

Given the type of pastoral care that Calvin demonstrated, it is reasonable to expect mixed reactions by those observing and receiving the care. The social result of Calvin's ministry appeared to be excellent in Geneva, and yet at times the specific rights of individuals seemed to be overlooked. The kind of praise Calvin received by those who observed Geneva from the outside can be seen in a comment of John Knox which McNeill notes:

In December 1556 he wrote to an English friend, Mrs. Anna Locke, in glowing praise of Calvin's city -- where, I neither fear nor am ashamed to say, is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places, I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion to be so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place.<sup>90</sup>

The population of Geneva, however, sometimes differed from this observation in their reaction to the reformer. In 1548, therefore not at the beginning of Calvin's ministry, some Genevans showed their disdain for Calvin by naming their dogs "Calvin". Other people

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>90</sup>McNeill, History and Character, 178.

reportedly shortened his name to "Cain". Some people stopped taking the communion "citing a hatred of Calvin as justification."<sup>91</sup> On his deathbed Calvin lamented the fact that there were times when people sent their dogs after him as he walked down the street.<sup>92</sup> There were obviously times in which the ministry of Calvin was not appreciated. Calvin, nevertheless, would feel it his duty to persist in his ministry for the sake of Christ even if not valued by others. In the end this commitment brought with it its rewards. For "when he died in Geneva in 1564, an eyewitness wrote that his corpse was 'followed by almost the whole city, not without many tears.'"<sup>93</sup> Even though Calvin did not see this, his faith that a positive result would come from his ministry would have allowed him to envision such a response.

A principle under which Calvin sought to operate in his ministry to others, although he would be the first to recognize that he did not do so perfectly, was expressed by Calvin in a sermon. ". . . the image of God is engraved in all men. Therefore not only do I despise my (own) flesh whenever I oppress anyone, but to my fullest capacity

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<sup>91</sup>Calvin, Sermons, 15.

<sup>92</sup>J. Calvin, Selections from his Writings (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975) 41.

<sup>93</sup>McNeill, History and Character, 93.



I violate the image of God."<sup>94</sup> To violate the image of God is certainly not to glorify God, which is the center of the pastoral life for Calvin. To be truly pastoral means that the glory of God is first considered and the proper pastoral action will proceed from this beginning.

An area which Calvin would never have thought to single out for extensive consideration but which is very much an issue for our society is the pastoral care of women and its relationship to the kind of care offered to men. Although Calvin does not address this issue extensively, it is easy to see how he operates in relationship to this question. Calvin did not ignore women in his pastoral contacts. Many of his letters are addressed to women; and the reason for the greater number of letters to men may well be the fact that it was mainly men who were the leaders in that day. A brief glance at the letters of Calvin shows that he often wrote to a husband and then wrote another letter to the wife, thereby speaking to them with respect to their individual differences and concerns. He exhorted women to be strong in the faith in the same manner as he did the men, although he did refer to them as the weaker vessels. The care Calvin offered women was not less because they were women; however, he did see that an order should be preserved which would have kept him from

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<sup>94</sup>Calvin, Sermons, 126.

offering the same options to women as he might to men. Specifically in relationship to the political order Calvin wrote the following:

About the government of women I expressed myself thus: Since it is utterly at variance with the legitimate order of nature, it ought to be counted among the judgments with which God visits us; and even in this matter his extraordinary grace is sometimes very conspicuous, because to reproach men for their sluggishness, he raises up women endowed not only with a manly but heroic spirit, as in the case of Deborah we have an illustrious example. But though a government of this kind seems to me nothing else than a mere abuse, yet I gave it as my solemn opinion, that private persons have no right to do anything but deplore it. For a gynae-cocracy or female rule badly organized is like a tyranny, and is to be tolerated till God sees fit to overthrow it.<sup>95</sup>

Although the above quote sounds negative in some ways it shows that Calvin was a careful observer and was carefully descriptive in his work. He believed female rule to be a judgment, but then observed that this may not be borne out in the actual observation. He saw it as an abuse but not one that private persons should actively oppose. He noted that female rule is like a tyranny but qualified this by the words "badly organized". Theologically Calvin may have had some problems with female rule but empirically he found little basis for this.

What is more instructive for us is a look at the condition and treatment of women in Geneva. Here we see that many misconceptions have made their way into modern literature. Statements like

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<sup>95</sup>Calvin, Letters, III, 38.

the following are irresponsible:

Neither Luther nor Calvin gave a thought to the equality of women as persons. Their marriages give evidence of this fact. Both married to prove to the world that the celibacy of the priesthood must be abandoned.<sup>96</sup>

While admitting that Calvin's marriage was not a model for marriage in twentieth-century society, his motives for marriage are misrepresented here and the inequality is stated in twentieth-century terms rather than sixteenth-century terms. Calvin may have been one of the greatest liberators of women in actual practice that the sixteenth century had yet seen. Calvin was a supporter of the concept that men had to be held to the same code of morals as the women, something unfamiliar in his time. Geneva sometimes failed in following this position in its passage of laws; yet almost fifty years after Calvin's death the relationship between men and women in Geneva was so different from other parts of Europe that Geneva was called a "paradis des femmes".<sup>97</sup> The reasons for this began with Calvin and must now be considered more extensively.

Calvin's position on women began from his biblical studies and expanded into applications to his culture. The biblical and

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<sup>96</sup>G. Harkness, Women in Church and Society (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972) 83.

<sup>97</sup>E. Monter, "Women in Calvinist Geneva (1550-1800)", Signs, VI, 2 (Winter 1980) 190.

theological material have been presented in chapter two; we will now observe how this concretely affected Calvin's ministry in Geneva.

We will observe the ministry to, and the participation of, women in primarily two areas: 1) the expectations as related to men in regard to morality; and 2) the educational opportunities for women. Of most significance at this point will be how the position of women differed from the traditional positions in their time and not in comparison to our times.

An aspect of morality that was important in Geneva was the sexual conduct of the citizens. This does not exclude other moral matters but a comparison of the expectation for both men and women are easily determined in this one area. Monter makes an initial observation in this area.

From the perspective of women's history, the important question is not how severely the Consistory treated sexual offenders, but whether they followed a double standard in repressing such misconduct. The evidence suggests that often it did not. In the first place, Calvin's theology -- the ideology of the Consistory -- offered an interesting mixture of female subordination and sexual equality, which his major modern commentator describes as a "differentiated equality" between the sexes.<sup>98</sup>

After considering specific percentages of how many men and women were disciplined for sexual offenses Monter concludes the following:

When the Consistory applied these principles (Calvin's) to specific

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 191.

problems of sexual misconduct, men's responsibility was taken as seriously as women's. The Calvinist doctrine of original sin may have led the ministers and judges toward misanthropy but not necessarily toward misogyny.<sup>99</sup>

The judgment of "misanthropy" is unsupported by Monter but the evidence does seem to point to an equal treatment of men and women in the area of sexual morality.

There is some evidence of a measure of inequality which is brought to light by the research of Douglass; however, it is possible to interpret this instance as a practical law in light of the circumstances of the sixteenth-century given the prevailing roles of men and women and the difficulty in communication over distances at times. The instance noted by Douglass is this:

Yet in the case where one of an engaged couple disappears before the marriage and the other wishes to be released from the promise, it appears that under certain circumstances a girl would be required to wait a year for her freedom, whereas a man would not.<sup>100</sup>

In the sixteenth-century it is conceivable that a man would be called away and detained in business while this would be very unlikely for the sixteenth-century woman. In any case, this aberration from equality is still minute as compared to other standards of the day.

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>J. Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation", in R. Reuther (ed.) Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974) 304.

A notable point in the equalization of the morality laws is that it was done by the men in power who passed laws which were protested by other men. It appears that it was the church which produced the men concerned with the equality, and it was the society (or those outside of the church) who produced the men who protested this equal treatment. This can be inferred from the following:

Geneva's court system deserved its reputation for strictness in judging sexual misbehavior, but the important point is that the court seemed strict to Genevan public (i. e., male) opinion because it prosecuted men as vigorously as it did women. Only rarely, as once in 1564, did the Consistory need to remind Geneva's magistrates that men must be punished as severely as women for sexual offenses.<sup>101</sup>

In Geneva, the church was fulfilling its role as a leader in society. Part of this seems to be due to Calvin's direct influence, for after he died the equality in the laws began to become more relaxed with the greater expectations being placed upon the women.<sup>102</sup>

A category which Monter places under sexual offences is that of witchcraft. Witchcraft seems to have been commonly accepted in Europe in the sixteenth-century as reality although the major theologians like Luther and Calvin say very little about it in their theological works. One of the rare references in Calvin to this problem is found in a letter when he refers to persons who were

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<sup>101</sup>Monter, 192.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

apprehended during the time of the plague spreading the disease "by what mischievous device I know not."<sup>103</sup> Calvin seems somewhat removed from this aspect of city life although he notes that fifteen women have been burned and some men punished even more severely. Yet given the state of persecution for witchcraft in this century, "Calvinist Geneva had an unusually low conviction rate for this crime, and it punished men accused of witchcraft relatively more severely than women."<sup>104</sup> Monter notes that in total "after the Reformation, forty-four women and twenty-four men were killed as witches in Geneva."<sup>105</sup> Any number is certainly too high to suit our standards and yet is apparently very low for that time.

Infanticide, a crime for which mainly women were prosecuted, is compared by Monter to sodomy, a crime for which men were persecuted. His conclusion is consistent with his previous findings.

Moreover, it seems pertinent to observe that Genevan prosecutions for infanticide are nearly equal, in number and severity, to those for the peculiarly male crime of sodomy. Once again, Calvinist justice seems equally harsh toward men and women who failed to fulfill their "natural" sexual functions.<sup>106</sup>

The equality of the sexes in the area of morality was an aspect of Genevan life that was unexpected in the sixteenth-century and is still

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<sup>103</sup> Calvin, Letters, I, 452.

<sup>104</sup> Monter, 196.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. (in the footnote).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 197.

unexpected by people of the twentieth-century as they look back to Geneva . The stereotypes of Calvin seem to lead much more to the opinion that women would be sorely oppressed as compared to men. The observation of Monter, however, is justified when he concludes, "One must not whitewash, but one cannot claim that Genevan justice punished women as a group much more severely than men."<sup>107</sup>

Evidence of the position of women as relates to their educational opportunities is less clear. Monter wrote, "The Reformation made bold declarations about providing free public schooling in 1536 but was actually uninterested in girl's education for a very long time."<sup>108</sup> Considering the historical circumstances this evaluation may be incorrect. The commitment to education alone would indicate the interest, or the commitment would not have been made. The observations of Douglass very likely reflect the attitude more clearly.

After 1536, the official beginning of the Reformation in Geneva, all Genevese children were required to attend school. Those families that could pay for tuition were expected to do so, but the schoolmaster was to be paid by the city so that he could feed and teach the poor children without fees. Girls and boys learned reading, arithmetic, catechism, and writing. After 1541, girls seem to have had their own school for primary instruction, but there were complaints for many years that no public secondary school for girls existed in the city.<sup>109</sup>

Douglass goes on to show that the impetus for the education of girls

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 196.      <sup>108</sup> Ibid., 205.      <sup>109</sup> Douglass, 304.



may have been the result of the Renaissance and the learned women it produced. There is clear evidence of the relationship of Calvin to some of these women both from accounts of his travel and from his own correspondence. This Renaissance influence complemented the Reformation emphasis of the "priesthood of all believers" very well as regards education. This universal priesthood of believers ". . . made it very important that all Christians should be capable of reading the Bible and other religious literature."<sup>110</sup>

The Reformation profoundly affected the church and society and the position of women in that church and society. Women experienced liberation to a degree previously denied them. That Calvin agreed that this liberation should take place cannot be questioned in light of some of the reforms he introduced in Geneva. But the extent of reform which he believed to be necessary was not a question he addressed and was not a central issue in his day. The question of extent may be addressed by other contemporary scholars as they seek out the implications of the theological system which Calvin used and the way in which he interpreted the Bible. We need only note here that Calvin was one of the Reformers involved in taking a significant and needed step for the cause of women in the sixteenth-century church.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

It may be difficult for women who are currently seeking ordination to regard the creation of the pastor's wife as a great step forward in the liberation of women from unjust repression, but for the women involved the Reformation was a profoundly liberating event.<sup>111</sup>

The theology and practice of Calvin will be analyzed more completely in the next chapter but it will be helpful to summarize the findings of this chapter before this analysis is made. It is clear that Calvin was a concerned minister who cared about the problems, feelings, and thoughts of the people of Geneva. If at times he became too harsh, it was not from a lack of love for the people as much as from an oversight of the individual for the good of the whole as he perceived it. It is true that the systems of morality were very strict and punishments might be severe, but it is also true that the morals of Geneva left much to be desired according to most accounts. The question of how to serve the glory of God in this context needs to be addressed further. Calvin was very possibly a severe person at times, but generally he also appears to have been a just and loving person.

The thought that Calvin had his own theocracy in Geneva or that he controlled the town as he wished is certainly false. When we read statements like ". . . the Genevan theocracy became a clerical

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<sup>111</sup>D. Steinmetz, "Theological Reflections on the Reformation and the Status of Women", Duke Divinity School Review, XLI, 3 (Fall 1976) 204.

dictatorship; and in the end Messieurs de Geneve ceased to dispute the absolute authority of their 'pope', John Calvin."<sup>112</sup>, we must recognize that they arise more out of the prejudice of the twentieth-century than they do out of historical fact. Calvin struggled with structures in his society just as we struggle with structures in our society. If he was more successful in bringing about change, it speaks to his credit and is not because he had some unfair advantage over us.

We have seen that the pastoral life for Calvin was a complete life: the pastoral ministry was not reserved only for members of his church or city but his encouragement, consolation, and advice went all over Europe to people of all backgrounds including the persecuted in France as well as rulers in both England and France. The pastoral life included civil and social concern and the use of his influence to change governmental policy in a peaceful manner if possible: from supporting orphans through the state to demanding fair wages and instituting a good educational system. The ministry was a ministry to the church of Jesus Christ universal and not just a ministry to the particular church in Geneva. The universal concern was specifically given expression in writing in the preface to the

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<sup>112</sup>J. Whale, The Protestant Tradition (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1955) 164.

last edition of the Institutes:

Moreover, I shall think my work has appeared at an opportune time as soon as I perceive that it has borne some richer fruit for the church of God than heretofore. This is my only prayer.  
 . . . God has filled my mind with zeal to apread his Kingdom and to further the public good.<sup>113</sup>

Calvin also saw it the responsibility of all Christians to be ministers to eadother. To those suffering under persecution he advises them to support one another and to meet together in order to strengthen one another. He exhorts those ruling in government to recognize that in the church they are brothers and sisters with even the humblest members; therefore, as rulers, they must be a part of the ministry of church members to other members. The pastoral responsibilities are shared by all of the church members and function in their relationships to each other.

The actual benefits proceeding from Calvin's ministry for women (and therefore for men) have also been observed. Women experienced a real change of status in Geneva which was possibly more revolutionary for that time than the changes supported by many today are for our time. The benefits for women came not only in actual practice as they were better educated, better provided for legally, and made more equal in moral expectations, but also they were

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<sup>113</sup> Calvin, Institutes, preface, 4.

raised to new positions theologically. They were viewed as integral and important members of the church. Calvin wrote concerning I Corinthians 14:30 ("If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent."), "From this it is clear that every member of the church is charged with the responsibility of public edification according to the measure of his grace, provided he perform it decently and in order."<sup>114</sup> This statement is complemented by the observation of Douglass as she notes concerning Calvin, "The priesthood discussed in I Peter 2 is not a priestly class but the whole people of God."<sup>115</sup> She later writes,

And only in Calvin among the sixteenth-century writers have I so far found the explicit suggestion that Paul's advice for women to be silent in the church should be considered in the category of traditions which are to be accommodated to the customs of each nation and age.<sup>116</sup>

Some important steps were taken in Calvin's theology and practice in relationship to the position of women within the body of Christ.

Women were viewed as integrally involved in expressing the image of God for the human race. The communication between husband and wife became almost a representation of the image of God, and by

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 1026 (IV, 1, 12)

<sup>115</sup>J. Douglass, "John Calvin and the People of God", Cranston Lecture, School of Theology at Claremont, 1979, 2.

<sup>116</sup>  
Ibid., 8.

later Reformed theologians is sometimes described as a virtual part of the image.<sup>117</sup> The benefits of raising the position of women were of course experienced by men also. Relationships and communication are easier to establish when both husband and wife are educated and can converse together about significant issues. Sexual relationships could be enjoyed as a mode of communication and not as only a weakness of the flesh as they had sometimes been described before. "Women and sex came to be seen as fundamentally good."<sup>118</sup> This opened men to the experience of relating to women as God's image-bearers rather than as temptresses. The tender remembrances of Calvin upon the death of his wife, Idelette, bear out the results of a new kind of relationship which the Reformation brought about between husbands and wives. The quotes which are read of Calvin writing that Idelette never got in the way of his work<sup>119</sup> miss the real point that Idelette never got in the way of his work but rather she helped him in his ministry.<sup>120</sup>

From the material presented on Calvin we can now analyze his

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<sup>117</sup>cf. L. Smedes, Sex For Christians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 31ff.

<sup>118</sup>Douglass, "Woman", 292.

<sup>119</sup>Harkness, 84.

<sup>120</sup>Calvin, Letters, II, 216.

theology and ministry and apply these insights and principles to pastoral care for the twentieth-century.

## Chapter IV

## THE PRESENT CONTEXT OF COUNSELING

The theology of Calvin has been considered systematically and his actual pastoral practice has been considered historically. His contributions to contemporary society must now be examined as they have been critiqued by different systems. The primary focus of this chapter will be the contributions for critique offered by Erich Fromm and by Abraham Maslow from the perspective of personality theory;<sup>1</sup> following this, the critique of feminist theology will be considered. Due to the developing nature of feminist theology there are no individuals widely noted for their feminist critique of Calvin. One study of Calvin that contributes in a limited manner is that of Georgia Harkness<sup>2</sup>, although she offers unsubstantiated interpretations of some of Calvin's materials as noted in the previous chapter and apparently has not progressed in her understanding of Calvin as

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<sup>1</sup>E. Fromm, Escape from Freedom (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960) Fromm is particularly useful here since the book deals directly with Calvin, specifically with the issues of freedom and authority. Maslow's material will be used more generally as we look at how narcissism is related to his views.

<sup>2</sup>G. Harkness, John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics (New York: Abingdon Press, 1931)



evidenced by her more recent book, Women in Church and Society.<sup>3</sup> An author not specifically concerned with feminist issues is André Bièler in his books, The Social Humanism of Calvin and L'Homme et La Femme Dans La Moral Calviniste.<sup>4</sup> Probably the most responsible effort to apply Calvin's principles and insights to the issues of the women's movement has been made by Jane Douglass in her articles on Calvin, some which have not yet been published.<sup>5</sup>

Critiquing Calvin's relevance for contemporary society necessitates an understanding of some of the issues which are being expressed by our society. Since this study is concerned primarily with the anthropological issues related to pastoral ministry, the issues of society will be considered with an anthropological focus. Oglesby clearly values the emphasis on anthropology in the present context of pastoral counseling. He writes, "When pastoral counselors take seriously the implications of anthropology in Christian per-

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<sup>3</sup>G. Harkness, Women in Church and Society (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972)

<sup>4</sup>A. Bieler, The Social Humanism of Calvin (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961) and A. Bieler, L'Homme et La Femme Dans La Moral Calviniste (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1963)

<sup>5</sup>J. Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation" in R. Reuther (ed.) Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974) and J. Douglass, "Calvin and the People of God", Cranston Lecture, School of Theology at Claremont.

spective, their work with people will be greatly enhanced."<sup>6</sup> He does not disparage the other loci of theology but observes the disregard of the anthropological focus in theology even though counseling has sought more recently to be more people oriented. Oglesby more clearly points to what he has in mind when speaking of the anthropological factors that have been overlooked in counseling.

To sum up, the anthropological factors which underlie pastoral care and counseling in Christian perspective focus on the nature of the human as creature with creativity, the nature of sin as separation and isolation, which produces fear and misery, and the nature of reconciliation as forgiveness and restoration of broken relationships.<sup>7</sup>

Here Oglesby speaks of the image of God, "creature with creativity"; the effects of the fall, "separation and isolation" with "fear and misery"; and the restoration, "forgiveness and restoration of broken relationships". Oglesby observed in actual practice that the anthropological understanding of ministers and seminary students is not communicated in their work. After hearing hundreds of verbatims he observed:

A characteristic that stands out in the actual work of these persons in the cure of souls is the neglect of theological constructs toward the informing of theory and practice. What the minister believed about sin and salvation often bore little if any resemblance to how

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<sup>6</sup>W. Oglesby, "Implications of Anthropology for Pastoral Care and Counseling", Interpretation, XXXIII, 2 (April 1979) 161.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 164.

s/he related to a parishioner in pastoral encounter.<sup>8</sup>

Oglesby is legitimately calling for a pastoral ministry that once more recognizes and uses the anthropological understandings of theology, a ministry that does not show "the neglect of theological constructs."

The call for greater theological sensitivity in pastoral work does not overlook the benefits of association with the psychological disciplines. The call, however, is for a recognition of the relationship of theology and psychology in a way that takes theology more seriously. Browning recognizes that the psychological disciplines have been taken seriously by psychologists and ministers but he believes that many ministers have given up too much of their heritage. He wishes to call ministers back to their discipline in order that both disciplines may be enriched. He writes, ". . . I now believe even more firmly than I once did that to incorporate insights from these disciplines with integrity requires clear understanding of the theological grounds of the church's ministry of care."<sup>9</sup> This "clear understanding" will provide a climate for counseling and ministry in general which gives theological terms new relevance for our society. Browning notes:

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>9</sup>D. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) 7.

Increasingly, the nonjudgmental attitude of all therapy -- including Protestant pastoral counseling -- has tended to operate in a climate of confused moral understanding. The concepts of acceptance, or even forgiveness, may be quite meaningless if a context moral order and judgment is absent or confused.<sup>10</sup>

Although Browning overstates his case when he writes "all therapy" by failing to include therapies that do consider judgments of right and wrong<sup>11</sup>, he does express an opinion of people which he apparently shares, there is confused moral understanding in spite of many of the more recent therapies. He finds that this confusion must be addressed by understanding moral order.

Moral order calls for method in Browning's view. It is the need for method that he sees asserting itself in our society once more. The many currents in our society of a religious nature all look for method. We see, therefore, a new interest in Eastern religions and various forms of meditation. People are not interested in the theological formulations of the churches; rather, they want to know how to live life. Browning ties these observations into the way the church has been functioning in society.

The issue of method in religious living is arising again. Theologians of the last forty years have restored to the faithful Protestant a sense of grace and forgiveness, but modern theologians have had little to say about a self-sustaining method for religious

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>11</sup>Note for example W. Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1965)

living. It was assumed that once the Christian felt the experience of grace and forgiveness, he would spontaneously know what to do, how to act, and how to put his life together in the context of our highly pluralistic and rapidly changing society. This assumption may have been wrong. It is probably not that simple. In addition, certain currents among the laity of the church and within the larger society suggest that this point of view was naïve and mistaken.<sup>12</sup>

The call is for a method that will help one combat the tendencies of sliding back into an unproductive life, to be able to avoid doing evil, and to be able to avoid experiencing oneself as bad. This call comes not only from the general populace and theologians, it comes also from psychologists themselves.

A.H. Maslow, one of the psychologists who initially called for a humanistic psychology, recognized that something more than just an emphasis on the positive in human life is needed. He recognized the need for a religious dimension in life. He wrote, "Without the transcendent and transpersonal we get sick, violent, and nihilistic, or else hopeless and apathetic."<sup>13</sup> This "transcendent and transpersonal" psychology is not just to deal with the positive elements in life. Maslow wrote:

I believe that another task which needs doing before we can have a good world is the development of a humanistic and transpersonal

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<sup>12</sup>Browning, 119.

<sup>13</sup>A. Maslow, Toward A Psychology of Being (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968) iv.

psychology of evil, one written out of compassion and love for human nature rather than out of disgust with it or out of hopelessness.<sup>14</sup>

Contemporary society also experiences a call from feminists for a re-evaluation of the role and treatment of women in society and the church. "This movement for women's liberation must be seen as striving after not merely freedom from oppression, but equally and simultaneously freedom for new ways of living and new views of ourselves as full persons."<sup>15</sup> Women wish to be treated with respect as equals but also seen as different from males. For many women it is not an overstatement to say that the credibility of the Christian church depends upon the possibility of Christian theology to speak a meaningful word to them in their quest for an understanding of how they can really be a part of the church and its ministry using the gifts they have been given.

In considering the needs expressed in our society in relation to the study of Calvin which has been done, we will first of all consider the psychoanalytic critiques of Calvin and the psychoanalytic constructs that relate to some crucial areas of his thought. Secondly, we will look at the feminist descriptions of Calvin and consider whether

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>D. Crabtree, "Women's Liberation and the Church", in S. Doely (ed.) Women's Liberation and the Church (New York: Association Press, 1970) 15.

Calvin's theology is still a viable option in the twentieth century for contribution to some feminist issues such as: the role of women in society, and the relationship between men and women in marriage as well as the church. These critiques will enable us to recommend alterations of Calvin's theology that may prove to make it more effective in meeting the needs expressed above.

### PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITIQUE

To the needs expressed by our society there may be answers available in a new understanding of Calvin. Our society expresses a need for a clear anthropology that is practically usable.<sup>16</sup> Calvin demonstrated such an anthropology but we must determine whether it is still usable in our society. The main critique of Calvin's anthropology concerns his understanding of authority and freedom. This understanding, therefore, will be a primary area for us to consider. The society also calls for an understanding of evil that is compassionate and will help people to develop rather than disintegrate. In Calvin we also find a clear conception of evil; however, it is not always seen as being compassionate. This will be a secondary area

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<sup>16</sup>cf. C. Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) 36f; Bieler, Social Humanism, 9; E. Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962) 66.

to be studied. Here the concepts of pride and narcissism become important. It is worthwhile to note at the outset that evil itself is never to be seen compassionately; rather, the human nature, which suffers from evil, is what is to be compassionately considered. Evil is evil and deserves our expressions of damnation; but the human nature in which we find it does not logically deserve the same treatment.

### Authority and Freedom

The study of the conception of authority and freedom in Calvin will be done mainly through the use of the critique of Erich Fromm. His book, Escape from Freedom, most clearly and comprehensively addresses this issue and therefore is the most useful. The subsequent consideration of pride and narcissism will be done using A.H. Maslow as a primary resource.

A problem in dealing with the issues of authority and freedom is that they always occur in a context and therefore the historical circumstances always must be taken into account. Recognizing this makes it imperative that a person critiquing another's conceptions be acquainted with the circumstances of history surrounding the person being critiqued. Fromm had a common ground for study with Calvin since Calvin, as Fromm, had to deal with the issues of freedom and authority. The critique Fromm made of Calvin would



be difficult, however, since the issues of freedom and authority were very much alive when Fromm wrote his book. This did not allow Fromm the benefit of being uninvolved emotionally which can often help objectivity. The interplay of these factors will be seen repeatedly. Whale notes the relationship of the issues of freedom and authority for Calvin and the twentieth century:

He wrestled with the old problem of freedom and authority which was inescapable under its sixteenth century forms as it is under the ideological forms of our twentieth century. And the point which the historian may not forget is that in the sixteenth century the alternative to order, system and authority was chaos.

This is not rhetorical exaggeration. No period was more critical for the Reformation than those years 1530-40 which saw Calvin's appearance on the stage of world history.<sup>17</sup>

Fromm also notes freedom as a twentieth-century issue when he writes:

My task in this book would be easier could I refer the reader to the completed study of the character structure of man in our culture, since the meaning of freedom can be fully understood only on the basis of an analysis of the whole character structure of modern man.<sup>18</sup>

An analysis of the "whole character structure of man" is impossible; however, the work on the task will at least lie partially outside of the bounds of psychology and psychoanalysis since the material of

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<sup>17</sup> J. Whale, The Protestant Tradition (Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press, 1955) 123.

<sup>18</sup> Fromm, vii.

the latter is largely empirically derived. The analysis may better be done by also using philosophical and theological tools as psychologists like Maslow have recognized.<sup>19</sup> It is more reasonable, however, to look to those trained in theology and philosophy to provide this analysis from the philosophical and theological perspective. This is one of Calvin's strengths.

As Fromm began his study of freedom he stated his thesis:

It is the thesis of this book that modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional, and sensuous potentialities.<sup>20</sup>

The thesis must automatically presuppose a reason that this freedom has not been gained. Fromm questions whether the real reason may not be that people have a desire to submit as well as a desire for freedom.<sup>21</sup> People then would develop this desire either from

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<sup>19</sup>A. Maslow, Religion, Values, and Peak Experiences (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964) Also note A. Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature (New York: Viking Press, 1971) and the comment in the introduction by Geiger, "The older he got, the more "philosophical" he became. It was impossible, he found, to isolate the pursuit of psychological truth from philosophical questions. How a man thinks cannot be separated from what he is, and the question of what he thinks he is, is never independent of what he is in fact, even though this, intellectually, may be an insoluble problem." (pp. xix-xx)

<sup>20</sup>Fromm, viii.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 6.

natural instinct or from society. Fromm believes the latter is the case. He wrote, "The most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man."<sup>22</sup>

At this point we recognize a difference between Fromm's theological understanding and that of Calvin's which he will critique. We have seen that Calvin understood human nature to be fixed in the sense that it is fallen and therefore all people are inclined to do evil by their (fallen) nature. We have also seen, however, that Calvin saw that a remnant of the created nature remains (the image of God) and this is where real value is found. This created image aspect of the nature, furthermore, is capable of being restored through the work of the Holy Spirit and the church. Clearly these are theological constructions which are not available to Fromm if he wishes his discussion to be purely psychoanalytical. Fromm's position on human nature is, however, derived from a philosophical or theological position as well as from empirical work since his empirical work had to be interpreted.

Fromm recognized through his psychoanalytical work an aspect of human dread that is also recognized in theology, isolation. He also

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 12.

saw that religion at this point can be an escape. "Religion and nationalism, as well as any custom and any belief however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others, are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation."<sup>23</sup> The dread of isolation may induce one to give up freedom in order to find security. Fromm did believe that a healthy religion was possible and developed these views in Psychoanalysis and Religion and Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis; however, the main concern here is Fromm's understanding of Calvin in relationship to the issues of freedom and authority and why Fromm believed Calvin's religion was not healthy.

As a demonstration of how Fromm used religious constructs in relationship to freedom let us look at his understanding of the fall in the Garden of Eden.

Man and woman live in the Garden of Eden in complete harmony with each other and with nature. There is peace and no necessity to work; there is no choice, no freedom, no thinking either. Man is forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He acts against God's command, he breaks through the state of harmony with nature of which he is a part without transcending it. From the standpoint of the Church which represented authority this is essentially sin. From the standpoint of man, however, this is the beginning of human freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Let us contrast how Calvin understood freedom to be functioning in

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 34.

the same account. In the garden Calvin believed that there was a necessity to work. He wrote, ". . . men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not lie down in inactivity and idleness."<sup>25</sup> The freedom was found in the fact that the garden did not grow weeds and that all work was a delight.<sup>26</sup> The thoughts of Adam and Eve were free, also, in that they never had to hide them from their Creator.<sup>27</sup> Calvin believed that the purpose of humanity existing in the garden was not an end in itself but that they would be raised to a higher state. For this purpose a mediator was still needed even for humanity in the perfect state.<sup>28</sup> The time in the garden was one of testing in order to give humanity the opportunity to demonstrate a capacity for an even greater freedom than was being experienced in the garden. In fact, humanity fell from this state of limited freedom and subsequently experienced a bondage of not being able to do the good and often could not even recognize the good. From the standpoint of Calvin, the fall in the garden was the beginning of the human bondage. For Fromm, it was "the beginning

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<sup>25</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 125, 2:15.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 159ff.

<sup>28</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 465 (II, 12, 1)

of human freedom." Clearly a concept of freedom is operating differently in Calvin and Fromm as well as the fact that Fromm saw the Eden story as symbolic and Calvin much more literally. Calvin found freedom only within a relationship to God while Fromm found that "positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality."<sup>29</sup> Fromm wanted to find freedom in a form of humanistic religion that rejected authoritarian religions which posited a supreme God that is in control. Calvin, on the other hand, believed that an attitude like Fromm's only sought to reaffirm the mistake already made in the fall; rather than this, Calvin found that freedom described by a humanistic religion could only be found, and in fact made even greater, when one recognized God as the ultimate sovereign of the creation. The freedom which Calvin presents not only takes into account the goals of Fromm but even goes beyond this in finding a freedom to relate to the divine God without guilt. This different emphasis forms the background for Fromm's critique of Calvin. An initial problem is obviously the lack of a depth understanding of Calvin on the part of Fromm.

Even though the understanding of freedom is different in Fromm and Calvin, Fromm recognized that the discussion of free-

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<sup>29</sup> Fromm, 258.

dom must take place within the context of the Reformation. He wrote, "Any understanding of freedom in modern society must start with that period in which the foundations of modern culture were laid, . . . ." <sup>30</sup> As he starts with this period, Fromm noted that there are striking relationships between that time and our time.

. . . the period of the Reformation is more similar to the contemporary scene than might appear at first glance; as a matter of fact, in spite of all the obvious differences between the two periods, there is probably no period since the sixteenth century which resembles ours as closely in regard to the ambiguous meaning of freedom. <sup>31</sup>

This recognition is valid and deserves careful consideration both historically and theologically. Although Fromm saw the historical connections, he was not, however, as careful in his historical interpretation of Calvin's theology and factors influencing it.

Fromm first of all described the theological context in which he found the Reformers working. He found that the medieval church fostered guilt but also gave confidence. <sup>32</sup> The confidence came in that people could do something about their sins. But we must recognize, as Fromm apparently did not, that the lack of confidence was one of the causes for the work of the Reformers. It is common knowledge that Luther was guilt-ridden and had no confidence in the

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 42.

state of his salvation. If there was a confidence experienced by the population in general, it must have been fostered by ignorance of the Church's doctrines rather than familiarity with them.

The conception of confidence becomes important for Fromm because it relates to his development of freedom. Fromm did not see an individual consciousness in the Middle Ages and therefore believes there was no experienced lack of freedom.<sup>33</sup> Fromm believed, however, that when the Renaissance and Reformation came, middle-class people began to experience freedom and followed theologies that gave expression to these feelings.<sup>34</sup> From this standpoint the church followed the demands of society to a great degree. By way of critique of Fromm, even though we cannot deny that the church functioned hand-in-hand with society, the historical picture is different if one sees that the medieval church did not foster confidence;<sup>35</sup> for then the church in the Reformation offered an

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>35</sup>cf. H. Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) 131-184. Note p. 133 specifically, "But although a sinner may be certain of God's mercy in granting his grace to those who do their very best, he has no certainty that he has in fact done his very best. The standard required is a love of God for God's sake, that is, an undefiled love: super omnia. It is this last condition in particular which makes it practically impossible to know with certainty that one has really reached the stage of the facere quod in se est."



answer to a social problem that was there because of a previous recognition of individuality and conceptions of freedom. The populace in this latter interpretation of history would have been more critical of the Reformation theologies and less likely to follow along rather naively. This latter understanding does, in fact, coincide better with the historical facts surrounding the Reformation. For people apparently were theologically interested and aware of the Reformation. This indicates a search and awareness of issues that must have existed for some time.

Fromm does recognize some aspect of critical functioning on the part of the sixteenth-century society,<sup>36</sup> yet this critical capacity is not used as a part of Fromm's analysis. Fromm wrote, "In blatant contradiction to the New Testament, Calvin denies the supreme role of love and says: 'For what the Schoolmen advance concerning the priority of charity to faith and hope, is a mere reverie of a distempered imagination. . . .'"<sup>37</sup> If this were actually an accurate portrayal of what Calvin said then either the populace of his day was uncritical in regard to such an obvious contradiction to Scripture or otherwise Calvin would not have had a

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<sup>36</sup>Fromm, 63.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 88.

very wide hearing given this kind of inconsistency. Clearly Calvin obtained a wide hearing and it is presumptuous to believe that the people of the sixteenth-century lacked a critical capacity to see such a contradiction. It is Fromm who, in fact, has misrepresented Calvin at this point. For while he accurately quotes the words of Calvin, he has mixed the terms of "supreme role of love" (Fromm's concern) with "the priority" (Calvin's concern). Calvin is only saying that chronologically in the Christian's experience faith and hope seem to come before real love can be expressed. It is clear from the context that this does not make faith and hope more supreme than love.<sup>38</sup> This error of Fromm in the interpretation of Calvin indicates the lack of a thoroughly critical evaluation of Calvin and this affects his further analysis as well. Observe some of the statements of Fromm demonstrating this:

The Calvinists quite naively thought that they were the chosen ones and that all others were those whom God had condemned to damnation. It is obvious that this belief represented psychologically a deep contempt and hatred for other human beings. . . .<sup>39</sup>

While the psychological conclusion may follow the observation, the observation itself is unfounded as can be seen from the previous

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<sup>38</sup>Institutes, 589 (III, 2, 41)

<sup>39</sup>Fromm, 89.

discussion of Calvin's theology. Another statement of Fromm:

Calvin's regime in Geneva was characterized by suspicion and hostility on the part of everybody against everybody else, and certainly little of the spirit of love and brotherliness could be discovered in his despotic regime.<sup>40</sup>

Once more the psychological interpretation may be valid based upon the misunderstanding previously noted of the lack of the supremacy of love; however, the actual fact upon which the psychological interpretation is made is once more in error. In the above quote the historical experience of Calvin's stay in Geneva is distorted. Even though the psychological interpretation of the facts considered may be valid, the interpretation is not applicable to either Calvin's theology or the actually observed outcomes in Geneva.

Although Calvin and Fromm do not approach the issue of freedom and authority in the same way, they would agree on the goal of freedom. A statement of Fromm with which Calvin would agree is, "Positive freedom on the other hand is identical with the full realization of the individual's potentialities. . . ." <sup>41</sup> For Fromm, however, this freedom is found when the individual is not determined by anything or anyone else. For Calvin, this freedom is found and further developed when one is restored to the image of

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 270.

God and lives within that relationship.

Fromm is limited by the fact that he trained as a psychoanalyst and therefore sought to confine himself primarily to interpretable fact and to humanistic philosophical presupposition. The question of the actual presence of a personal God, therefore, was not a part of his investigation. Calvin, on the other hand, wrote as a theologian and therefore had the presence of a personal God as a context for his considerations. This difference in approach makes it necessary to interpret facts differently. For example, Fromm is correct in finding a personal God as a means of escape into authoritarianism if there is no personal God.<sup>42</sup> However if there is a personal God, then the issue is not whether one must deal with escape but with how to deal with the reality of the presence of a God and the nature of this God. This is Calvin's concern. Fromm still serves a purpose for the theologian, however, in his observation that God can be used as a means of escape by some people from their responsibilities to develop their God-given potential. They use God as an authoritarian dictator who keeps them from freedom. The further development here that must be done by the theologian is to show how God may give freedom rather than deny it. This is showing a different

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<sup>42</sup>  
Ibid., 141.

kind of God with a greater concern for humanity. This is a task primarily for the theologian and cannot be done exclusively by Fromm or other psychoanalysts. To understand how Calvin sees freedom within the reality of God shows how theology contributes to knowledge and lifestyle in a manner not open to those using only the tools of psychology and psychoanalysis.

Calvin spoke of the freedom of humanity as it was created by God. He saw that humanity was totally free as created and could choose either good or evil.<sup>43</sup> In this state of freedom humanity chose to try to find good within itself and without God; instead, it found evil, for all good is found in God. The choice bound humanity over to a bondage of sin. Freedom was now lost.<sup>44</sup> The reality of the creation structure was that humanity was free when choosing to exist in the good but lost freedom if it chose to bind itself in evil. Evil was binding; it did not permit one to choose the good once more.

Calvin based his theology of good and evil on his understanding of the scriptures and the understanding of some previous theologians and philosophers. Today, however, the same conclusion of the persistent nature of evil is being seen by psychologists and psychia-

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<sup>43</sup>Institutes, 195-196 (I, 15, 8)

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 244-245 (II, 1, 4)

trists. As noted earlier, Maslow called for a transcendent and transpersonal psychology of evil. Menninger also has raised the question in his book, Whatever Became of Sin?<sup>45</sup> The need to deal with evil and the freedom of human choice is once more an issue in society much in the same way as it was in the sixteenth century. Fromm has brought the issue to the forefront but work in theology is necessary to provide some resolution of the issue.<sup>46</sup>

Calvin specifically addressed the issue of Christian freedom in his century. For him it was ". . . a thing of prime necessity, and apart from a knowledge of it consciences dare undertake almost nothing without doubting; they hesitate and recoil from many things; they constantly waver and are afraid."<sup>47</sup> He was also aware that a discussion of Christian freedom raised many questions and caused many kinds of hostile formulations.

For, as soon as Christian freedom is mentioned, either passions boil or wild tumults rise unless these wanton spirits are opposed in time, who otherwise most wickedly corrupt the best

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<sup>45</sup>K. Menninger, Whatever Became of Sin? (New York: Hawthorne, 1977)

<sup>46</sup>cf. E. Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart, 1955) and E. Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950) These two books address the relationship of evil and freedom in society more explicitly than the previously cited book, E. Fromm, Escape From Freedom.

<sup>47</sup>Institutes, 833 (III, 19, 1)

things. Some, on the pretext of this freedom, shake off all obedience toward God and break out into unbridled license. Others disdain it, thinking that it takes away all moderation, order, and choice of things. What should we do here, hedged about with such perplexities? Shall we say good-bye to Christian freedom, thus cutting off occasion for such dangers? But, as we have said, unless this freedom be comprehended, neither Christ nor gospel truth, nor inner peace of soul, can be rightly known. Rather, we must take care that so necessary a part of doctrine be not suppressed, yet at the same time that those absurd objections which are wont to arise be met.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly, Calvin did not want to deny freedom; for to do so was to deny the gospel and inner peace. Contrary to Fromm, however, Calvin did not see the issue of freedom arising as humanity discovered their individuality in the sixteenth century and progressed further in knowledge; rather, he saw that the issue of freedom was a perennial problem that was still being discussed in the New Testament.<sup>49</sup>

Whereas Fromm has tied his discussion of freedom to the understandings of our society, Calvin has tried to use theology in a way that does not so limit his discussion. Because of this, his contributions are more easily applied through many stages of history even though the societal context is always necessarily present.

Calvin's discussion is centered around three aspects of freedom. The first part of freedom is ". . . that the consciences of

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 834 (III, 19, 1)

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 835 (III, 19, 3)

believers, in seeking assurance of their justification before God, should rise above and advance beyond the law, forgetting all law righteousness."<sup>50</sup> This rising above the law is in accord with the restoration of the image which raises us from the bondage to sin and once more makes us a reflection of the original creation of God. Legalism, for Calvin, is an evidence of bondage to the old manner of life.

The second part of freedom is ". . . that consciences observe the law, not as if constrained by the necessity of the law, but that freed from the law's yoke they willingly obey God's will."<sup>51</sup> The willingness to obey indicates a restoration of the image of God and a renewal of the freedom that was originally experienced. In reality people still experience evil, which is an offense to God, but they are no longer held accountable for the evil when seen by God through Jesus Christ. Christian freedom is, therefore, to be seen in the context of gratitude.

The third part of freedom ". . . lies in this: regarding outward things that are of themselves "indifferent", we are not bound before God by any religious obligation preventing us from sometimes using

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 834 (III, 19, 2)

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 836 (III, 19, 4)



them and other times not using them indifferently."<sup>52</sup> The principle involved is that all should be done to the glory of God. The Christian, therefore, may use anything that is not clearly wrong or evil in glorifying God. Everything must be used as God intended it to be used.<sup>53</sup> Not to use parts of creation in this way does not entangle one in the law once more but demonstrates the weakness of the nature which we still experience. The Christian says that everything must be used as God intended it because this is the purpose of its creation; this is God's intention; this is the Christian's desire; and this is a responsibility above the level of mere legalism. The must arises out of love for God. In this relationship of love the thought of retributive punishment does not play a role. Using things "indifferent" this way is very freeing to a person. No longer is there the necessity to condemn oneself for experiencing certain goods that others do not. However in this context Calvin does admonish us to remember Christian love. He stressed that in all freedom we should limit our own consumption if a neighbor is in any need.<sup>54</sup> We limit

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 838 (III, 19, 7)

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 720 (III, 10, 2)

<sup>54</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1960) 112-113, 8:13-14.

ourselves out of love for our neighbor rather than out of ascetic scruples.<sup>55</sup> Calvin saw that the matters of inequality and poverty in relationship to Christian responsibility caused troubles of the conscience for people. He wrote:

But these matters are more important than is commonly believed. For when consciences once ensnare themselves, they enter a long and inextricable maze, not easy to get out of. If a man begins to doubt whether he may use linen for sheets, shirts, handkerchiefs, and napkins, he will afterward be uncertain also about hemp; finally doubt will even arise over tow. For he will turn over in his mind whether he can sup without napkins, or go without a handkerchief. If any man should consider daintier food unlawful, in the end he will not be at peace before God, when he eats either black bread or common victuals, while it occurs to him that he could sustain his body on even coarser foods. If he boggles at sweet wine, he will not with clear conscience drink even flat wine, and finally he will not dare touch water if sweeter and cleaner than other water. To sum up, he will come to the point of considering it wrong to step upon a straw across his path, as the saying goes.<sup>56</sup>

Calvin brings the issue of freedom down to very practical matters.

Today it might be compared to the issue of whether we should eat cake when others in the world are hungry; for this too affects our freedom.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Bieler, 32.

<sup>56</sup> Institutes, 839 (III, 19, 7)

<sup>57</sup> For a discussion of Christian freedom in many different areas of Calvin's thought see the work of A. Bieler, Social Humanism of Calvin. This short book notes well the positions of Calvin and also begins to relate them to our time.

One more point must be made before summarizing the contributions of Calvin and Fromm to the problem of freedom. This is that Calvin finds true freedom only to be experienced by believers who experience the re-creating work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who brings liberty; and the "freedom" to ignore the Spirit is only a "freedom" to remain in bondage. To those who only see freedom in being able to say no to God, Calvin responded, "A noble freedom, indeed -- for man not to be forced to serve sin, yet to be such a willing slave that his will is bound by the fetters of sin!"<sup>58</sup> The reality is that ". . . without the Spirit man's will is not free, since it has been laid under by shackling and conquering desires."<sup>59</sup>

As Fromm looked for freedom, he concluded that humanity had to be free from any pathological compulsion.<sup>60</sup> In this way the individual could then form that ". . . spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality."<sup>61</sup> For as far as he went Fromm was correct in his analysis and prescription. What he did not recognize

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<sup>58</sup>Institutes, 839 (III, 19, 7)

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 265 (II, 2, 5)

<sup>60</sup>Fromm, The Sane Society. This book shows how Fromm did believe that institutions could facilitate growth to freedom away from compulsion.

<sup>61</sup>Fromm, Escape, 258.

was that even we, as "free" individuals, would be or are bound up in fetters to compulsion. It might have been true, and still be true, that people experience Calvin as an "institution" that allows them to escape from any real freedom. But it is also true that to leave this system of Calvin and then adopt what Fromm has said only leads to adopting another human system as a means to freedom. The experienced need to integrate one's personality is a task that does not automatically lead one to feel freedom or progress toward it. Rather, if seen as a task, it binds one to continual growth and development that never has an end but becomes an end in itself for many people. It is a sign of theological instability when people go from one psychological fad to another never recognizing a type of bondage to those systems. In a similar manner it is an instability when people adopt first one theology and then another looking for an effective way to organize life. The real need is one which Calvin tried to point out but which often has been misunderstood when he has been used by people searching for a way to escape freedom rather than find it.

Calvin points people to God as the source and origin of freedom.

Calvin's theology is certainly not meant to bring freedom; it could only bring another form of bondage, and, indeed, apparently has done so in Fromm's view. Calvin's theology is meant to point one to God and if it fails in this it is of no use in bringing anyone to an

experience of freedom, an integral part of the gospel message for Calvin.

The discussion of Fromm's and Calvin's points of view shows a benefit of dialogue between the psychoanalyst and the theologian. Fromm has diagnosed a problem and observed that the use of Calvin's theology (as one example) has not solved the problem. Fromm has not recognized that his prescription may only bring about another kind of bondage. There is really a limited outlet to the problem of freedom for a psychoanalyst. The theologian now uses tools to address the problem which the psychoanalyst ~~does not have~~. It is then seen that the only way to escape the problem of the lack of freedom is to recognize God and the freedom that can be found in the renewal of his image. Fromm's misreading of Calvin may also point out to the theologian aspects of theology that must be emphasized in modern society since they are apparently not being effectively communicated. In the end, however, there is one point at which the psychoanalyst and theologian may differ and not resolve. This point is the reality and definition of God. If God is real, then the Christian solution to the problem of freedom is not only satisfactory but realistic. If, however, a psychoanalyst refuses to acknowledge the existence of God (something not necessarily characteristic of Fromm), then the dialogue begins to break down. The necessity of this dialogue may

not have been apparent to Fromm when he wrote; however, the dialogue is now seen to be crucial as Menninger calls for the input of theology just as Maslow calls for the transpersonal and transcendental. Psychology and psychoanalysis can only proceed effectively with their discussion of freedom as they acknowledge the need for the input of theology. Calvin's theology is capable of providing some of this input in regard to the consideration of freedom; but only so long as the theology is seen to point to something beyond empirical reality. Psychoanalysis cannot demonstrate the realities to which Calvin was pointing.

### Pride and Narcissism

The second question raised earlier in this chapter was how evil was to be dealt with in a context of narcissism and pride. There is a relationship seen by Lasch -- an avant-garde sociologist who addresses the popular feelings in society more than issues of serious scholarship -- between the individualism called for by Fromm and the development of narcissism in our society. He wrote:

This book . . . describes a way of life that is dying -- the culture of competitive individualism, which in its decadence has carried the logic of individualism to the extremes of a war of all against all, the pursuit of happiness to the dead end of a narcissistic preoccupation with the self.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>C. Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York: Norton, 1978) xv.

Lasch surveyed many aspects of society in his attempt to establish that we live in a culture of narcissism. He believes that the culture is supported and encouraged by the psychological mindset of our times and sees this producing a trivialization of many values. An end result is also the breakdown of relationships -- which is all too observable by pastors and other practitioners in human relationships. Lasch made a statement which points to the practical needs which confront the society.

The new therapies spawned by the human potential movement, according to Peter Marin, teach that "the individual will is all powerful and totally determines one's fate"; thus they intensify the "isolation of the self." This line of argument belongs to a well-established American tradition of social thought.<sup>63</sup>

Lasch has generalized concerning many therapies that have very different philosophies and methods; however, he may be in touch with the way people view these therapies in general. This possibly shows an inherent weakness in the human potential therapies in that people begin to feel a bondage to the therapies. An attempt has been made to address this weakness by theologians in recognizing the need for theological outlook and input; also, the weaknesses of the human potential movement have been addressed by attempting to integrate theology with the movement to form a system of care concerned

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<sup>63</sup>  
Ibid., 9.

with not only growth but also with relationship. This is seen in the work of Clinebell as he emphasizes the need for growth within a context; thus, the growth group.<sup>64</sup>

Lasch finds the developers of contemporary narcissism misunderstanding important concepts in life both historically and in the present. These are concepts such as love, self-fulfillment, and self-denial. In critiquing Fromm's use of narcissism, Lasch wrote:

. . . Fromm uses the term as a synonym for the "asocial" individualism which, in his version of progressive and "humanistic dogma, undermines cooperation, brotherly love, and the search for wider loyalties. Narcissism thus appears simply as the antithesis of that watery love for humanity (disinterested "love for the stranger") advocated by Fromm under the name of socialism.<sup>65</sup>

The understanding of love in this context is not limited only to Fromm, however, as it is the generalized understanding of our society.

"Love" as self-sacrifice or self-abasement, "meaning" as submission to a higher loyalty -- these sublimations strike the therapeutic sensibility as intolerably oppressive, offensive to common sense and injurious to personal health and well-being.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>H. Clinebell, Growth Counseling (Nasville: Abingdon Press, 1979) Note the comprehensiveness of the six dimensions of growth on pages 19-36.

<sup>65</sup>Lasch, 31.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. 13.



Narcissism, for Lasch, is a hostile reaction to society as well as a hostile reaction to oneself due to the limits within which one feels bound to exist.<sup>67</sup> Lasch's definition and the subsequent implications point out a need for a study of self-denial and self-fulfillment. The implications of the position in which he finds contemporary humanity also indicates a need to address the issue of pride -- whether it is positive or negative, necessary or unnecessary.

Therapy legitimates deviance as sickness, but it simultaneously pronounces the patient unfit to manage his own life and delivers him into the hands of a specialist. As therapeutic points of view and practice gain general acceptance, more and more people find themselves disqualified, in effect, from the performance of adult responsibilities and become dependent on some form of medical authority.

The psychological expression of this dependence is narcissism. In its pathological form, narcissism originates as a defense against feelings of helpless dependency in early life, which it tries to counter with "blind optimism" and grandiose illusions of personal self-sufficiency. Since modern society prolongs the experience of dependence into adult life, it encourages milder forms of narcissism in people who might otherwise come to terms with the inescapable limits on their personal freedom and power -- limits inherent in the human condition -- by developing competence as workers and parents. But at the same time that our society makes it more and more difficult to find satisfaction in love and work, it surrounds the individual with manufactured fantasies of total gratification. The new paternalism preaches not self-denial but self-fulfillment. It sides with narcissistic impulses and discourages their modification by the pleasures of

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<sup>67</sup>It is evident that Lasch is using a different definition of narcissism than the traditional psychoanalytical definition used by Fromm. Fromm recognizes the developmental exhibition of narcissism in the young child as a stage of its' development. Narcissism is not, therefore, only a hostile reaction.

becoming self-reliant, even in a limited domain, which under favorable conditions accompanies maturity.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that Lasch's observations are overstated and inaccurate at points (such as therapy legitimating deviance and pronouncing the patient unfit to manage life) is not as important as recognizing that he has given voice to a complaint of our society. If the complaint is unjustified, as it appears to be at many points, we must at least recognize a responsibility to clearly communicate the presuppositions and goals of therapy to the general populace. Lasch's accusation is that some representatives of the human potentials movement have paved the way for a new narcissism. This assertion is made less from an academic standpoint at this point than from a feel for the pulse of society. In order to understand more clearly how Lasch's accusations may or may not be the case requires further analysis. In order to do this analysis, the contributions of A.H. Maslow will be studied. Maslow is an acknowledged representative of the human potentials movement in the psychological field and therefore can serve as a representative for us.

Maslow theorized a hierarchy of needs which all people strive to satisfy. The most basic need was the physiological. This was followed by safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteems

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<sup>68</sup>Lasch, 231.

needs, and last of all self-actualization. The characteristics of self-actualization were: 1) the ability to lay aside all self-consciousness, 2) to choose to take risks, 3) to choose according to inner likes and dislikes, 4) to take responsibility for actions, 5) to have courage about self-awareness, 6) to work to achieve goals, 7) to identify peak experiences, and 8) to recognize defenses and psychopathologies.<sup>69</sup>

Maslow characterized the needs of the first four levels in development as deficiency-needs. These needs had to be provided before an individual could progress in the hierarchy. The needs of level five, self-actualization, were different however and were called "growth needs", "being values", or "metaneeds". These needs were not hierarchical and were of equal importance. The list of needs here were: truth, goodness, beauty, aliveness, individuality, perfection, necessity, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, playfulness, effortlessness, self-sufficiency, and meaningfulness. The abstractness of these terms alone indicate that self-actualization can never be totally obtained but that it is an ongoing process.

The question of narcissism when raised with Maslow focuses on the relationship of the deficiency-needs to the being-needs. If narcissism can be broadly defined as actions or attitudes which

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<sup>69</sup> Maslow, Farther Reaches, 45ff.

indicate that a person is more intent upon personal gratification rather than the gratification of the milieu in which one exists, then it seems that the deficiency-needs demands that a person start out in life with a narcissistic orientation and remain there at least until self-actualization is met. Unfortunately, if Maslow's observations are correct, most people do not reach the stage of self-actualization. This condemns most of the population to a state of narcissism. It is narcissism that functions at the basic-need levels and therefore it is symptomatic of a lack of basic needs being met. Maslow is not the only psychologist to recognize this. Fromm wrote in a similar vein:

. . . the so-called narcissistic person, who is not so much concerned with getting things for himself as with admiring himself. While on the surface it seems that these persons are very much in love with themselves, they actually are not fond of themselves, and their narcissism. . . is an overcompensation for the basic lack of self-love.<sup>70</sup>

The issue of narcissism is, however, also present with those who are self-actualizing in Maslow's view. For the self-actualizing person has no need for the approval of others (the third characteristic). This need would be a deficiency-need. Self-actualizing persons, therefore, find meaning and value to be integrally tied to what they are personally doing and involved in. Other people are necessary to their enterprise but not in the sense that they affect the self-

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<sup>70</sup>Fromm, Escape, 116.

actualizers ability to be self-sufficient in getting their needs met. When Maslow speaks of sexual relations with respect to self-actualizing people, he notes that these people tend to be better able to enjoy the sexual act. At the same time there is no great need for the sexual act to be experienced and these people are not threatened if they are denied sexual intercourse. This indicates once more that the worth of the action is found within the individual and not so much within the relationship. Maslow's emphasis is self-sufficiency and the means to obtaining this self-sufficiency is through the group. The group serves the individual's purpose.<sup>71</sup>

Even though it is apparent that Maslow's system seems to be structured in such a way that the development of narcissistic people is demanded (using the previous definition of narcissism), Maslow himself did not find self-actualizing people to exhibit narcissism. He found the facts of his research to be different than what some scholars believe his system to demand. Perhaps the discrepancy here is to be found in the type of research that Maslow did and the subjectivity which accompanies all such research. Lowry describes the self-actualization research of Maslow from the notes that Maslow left

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<sup>71</sup> F. Gable, The Third Force (New York: Grossman, 1970) 84-86.

behind after his death.<sup>72</sup> This research will be summarized here.

Maslow's studies on self-actualization began when he took notes on the personalities of two of his teachers, Max Wertheimer and Ruth Benedict. He greatly admired these two persons and believed that they must possess characteristics which would be desirable for all humanity. As he took these notes, he found that both persons had many similar characteristics and he began to theorize that perhaps all healthy people had similar underlying characteristics. He also theorized that if there were similar underlying characteristics of healthy people, these were most likely developmental and would be found with greater frequency in old people. The first phase of his investigation, therefore, began with his observation of old people. When he found old people whom he considered to be very healthy and to have a good perspective on life, he considered them to be self-actualized and capable of giving "being-love". But Maslow ran into an unexpected and serious problem in his initial research. There were too many people he did not like, and also people were not available in large numbers. Maslow, therefore, turned to the college population. As a college professor this provided him with many subjects.

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<sup>72</sup>R. Lowry, A.H. Maslow: An Intellectual Portrait (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1973).

It was when he began to study college students that Maslow began a notebook which he called his Good Human Being notebook (GHB). From this notebook we find his methods of research laid out, his results recorded, and his later revisions in method recorded. It is from this notebook, which was first available in 1973, that we find invaluable material for studying the development of Maslow's theory.

In initially trying to find students he considered self-actualized, Maslow picked out promising students from his classes. He then looked up their security scores (which he had on file from testing), interviewed them for one hour, had them write up a report of the interview, and last of all he gave them a Rorshach test.<sup>73</sup> This method of choosing self-actualized students, however, presented problems. Because almost all of the students he picked had poor Rorshach test results, Maslow theorized that the Rorshach test was not valid in the type of research he was conducting.<sup>74</sup> A second problem was that the security scores of many of the people Maslow picked did not seem to be very good even though he was fairly convinced that he wished to call them self-actualizers. Some

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

students with high security scores he found very exasperating while others with low security scores he found very impressive.<sup>75</sup> Even more telling to Maslow concerning his methodology was the fact that he observed himself picking mostly the good-looking girls from his classes. When he considered this fact, he became convinced that his methodology was too defective to produce results. He realized that a more objective set of criteria for selection was necessary.

The second method Maslow used was a method employing the subjective impressions of his students. Through a combination of subjective elements Maslow hoped to make a more objective choice of the qualified students. This method produced students who generally had very high security scores, but Maslow could not envision some of them as appropriate subjects at all.<sup>76</sup> He concluded that security scores and self-actualization must not be related. This meant that Maslow was now picking students without the Rorshach test and without security scores. The result recorded is that the students with whom he was working at the time were not serving his purposes very well.<sup>77</sup>

As Maslow continued his research, he theorized that his pro-

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 84.



blems arose from the fact that a self-actualized person had nothing to gain from talking and exposing himself and was probably resistant. This would mean that students with high security scores might be self-actualizers who were merely defending their privacy. If this was the case then once Maslow got to know these students he would find the sample for which he was searching. He concluded, after pursuing this lead for a time, that this group certainly did not include many students he considered to be self-actualizers.<sup>78</sup>

Maslow tried for some continuity in his research by working with those students he had already picked. But he now began to supplement that research with another aspect. This was the reading of biographies of great people he thought might have been self-actualizers. He also began using the Rorschach tests again, but now as the sole determiner of finding self-actualizing students. From these additional studies he classified the subjects of the biographies into either self-actualizers or regular people and concluded once more that the Rorschach tests were not helpful. At this point in time Maslow suffered a severe heart attack and moved to California to recuperate. He lost contact with most of his students and, therefore, with most of the resources for his considerations of self-

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 88

actualization.

While in California the notes Maslow made on self-actualization in the GHB are very sporadic but are very revealing about some of his earlier research. The notes often concern follow-up on some of those students Maslow had been considering as possibly self-actualized. After re-establishing contact with several of his former subjects, he noted that one had been "insane" for a time, that others had needed psychotherapy, that he detested some of them after meeting them once more, and also that a few had adjusted well in life and pursued very normal and healthy life patterns. This follow-up tended to point out that the segment of students Maslow had studied were really quite similar to a general cross-section of the population.

The last entry of the notebook was in December, 1949, and from the background of these studies Maslow published a paper in 1950 entitled, "Self-Actualizing People: A Study of Psychological Health." In describing the coming of this paper, Lowry writes,

The vision of self-actualization that appeared in the notebook was groping and tentative, to say the least. True, most of the elements of the 1950 paper were there, but they were there only in the rough. In sharp contrast, the vision presented in the published paper was finely cut, polished, and set. Also, notwithstanding Maslow's apologies for methodological shortcomings, it was presented with a confidence that could scarcely be described as groping or tentative.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 39.

It is safe to assume that the gap between the research evidence in the GHB notebook and the published paper is the gap of theoretical pre-suppositions. If this is true, as it appears to be, then the system of Maslow may indeed be accused of a tendency towards narcissism without having to apparently contradict the research of Maslow. The research was not of such a nature as to establish the relationship of the theory of Maslow to the people he wished to call self-actualized.

The summary of Maslow is brief but serves our purposes at this point. Despite the shortcomings in the research, Maslow has contributed to our culture by emphasizing the salugenic rather than the pathological in helping humanity. This was a needed humanistic as well as theological input; however, it also introduced a new kind of bondage which was an enslavement to health -- one had to be developing health before one really felt acceptable. A person could feel pride at growing but not in the fact of just being. In order to develop one had to be concerned initially about oneself. To give to others was done in order that one might get esteem in return. Maslow certainly did not mean to introduce this type of motivation into society; but if Lasch's observations are at all correct, this is the practical result of his work. Possibly a recognition of this led Maslow to call for a study of evil. The system which he had hoped would prove to be an answer for many of the ills of humanity was being confounded

by a system of evil which he had formerly thought could be overcome by his humanistic psychology.<sup>80</sup> He was driven, therefore, to recognize a need for the input of those dealing in the theological realm along with his work.

The study of narcissism must also be a study in pride. If narcissism is exhibited when a person is intent upon personal gratification then it is also possible, as pointed out specifically by Fromm, that pride, which may appear narcissistic, is a reaction of those who experience a low self-esteem and are trying to compensate through a defense of apparent self-love. The close relationship between pride and narcissism is furthermore recognized by Menninger. "Pride, a virtue under certain circumstances, was -- and still is -- considered by theologians the basic form of sin. . . . Synonyms for pride are vanity, egocentricity, hubris, arrogance, self-adoration, selfishness, self-love, and narcissism; . . . ."<sup>81</sup> That this pride or narcissism is sin is clear for Menninger. He defines sin here in a social context:

Sin has a willful, defiant, or disloyal quality; someone is defied or offended or hurt. The willful disregard or sacrifice of the welfare of others for the welfare or satisfaction of the self is an essential quality of the concept sin. . . . And sin is thus, at

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<sup>80</sup>Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, 3-4.

<sup>81</sup>Menninger, 135.

heart, a refusal of love to others.<sup>82</sup>

The concepts of pride and narcissism are seen to lie at the root of the question of where freedom is found in the modern consciousness. Pride and narcissism are bound up with the questions of one's social responsibilities. To see how the contemporary psychological presentations of pride and narcissism may contribute to our care of people using Calvin's theology requires that we understand what pride meant in his theology. We can then see at what points modern psychological definitions may increase our clarity of thought and understanding and at what points they must be discarded or revised.

For Calvin, pride was a vice that was basic in our existence.<sup>83</sup> This pride ". . . is innate in all of us. . ."<sup>84</sup> "For we always seem to ourselves righteous and upright and wise and holy. . ."<sup>85</sup> After saying this Calvin made the theological point noted earlier that we should truly get to know ourselves so that our pride may be stripped away from us when we recognize our fallenness.<sup>86</sup> Then, when we

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>83</sup>Institutes, 269 (II, 2, 11 n50)

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 37 (I, 1, 2)

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 255 (II, 2, 1)

are yet instructed in the capacities of our created nature we have no cause for pride but for humility as we recognize how much we have been given.<sup>87</sup> This recognition should, then, make us seek to serve God and, therefore, others because of the love given to us and empowering us through the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, this is called self-denial.<sup>88</sup> Self-denial is the desire to serve, being free from the need for glory and power. Calvin said of self-denial, "When it has taken possession of their hearts, it leaves no place at all first either to pride, . . . or to other evils that our self-love spawns."<sup>89</sup>

From the presentation of Calvin's theology that has already been given, it is easy to see that his conceptions of pride and self-denial fit well into his overall pattern of theology. What Calvin does not point out, however, is the difference between pride and self-denial as they function in the believer and the unbeliever. In a psychologically healthy believer it is only natural that humility is the response towards God when one recognizes the extent of the gift that has been given. It is analogous to a person receiving a very expensive and valuable gift from a friend after the person has openly

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 255-256 (II, 2, 1)

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 690-691 (III, 7, 2)

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 691 (III, 7, 2)

betrayed the interests of the friend. Clearly, the proper response is one of humility and thanksgiving for the re-established relationship rather than pride that one is so good as to have received the gift. In the psychologically healthy unbeliever, however, the situation is different. Here there is no recognition of the origin of the gift, which at a minimum is still the excellent remnants of created nature; therefore, a person should be proud of what is seen that shows any excellence at all. Given the reality of God's operation in humanity the pride may be unfounded; nevertheless, it is an indication of psychological health since at least the excellent remnants of the created nature are in measure seen and valued by this unbeliever. Spiritual health and psychological health are seen to be two different aspects of life here. They are neither totally separate or, on the other hand, synonymous terms.

Clearly there are points of contact as well as differences between Calvin and Fromm in their addresses to the meaning of pride. These differences are not so much substantive as definitional at many points. Calvin uses the concept of pride theologically. For him it is a fundamental inward direction in one's life occasioned by the fall of humanity. As such, every person is afflicted to a degree with this malady even though it may not be empirically manifested in any particular individual's life by outward observation. On the other

hand, Fromm uses the concept of pride psychologically. For him pride is demonstrated by the actions of a person and betray the interior state of the person -- namely low self-esteem. With this observation Calvin would have no particular quarrel. Calvin would assert, however, that not only the person with low self-esteem who exhibits prideful behavior but also the person with high self-esteem who may not exhibit prideful behavior both still have a fundamental orientation of pride in relationship to God. This fundamental orientation is demonstrated not so much emotionally, although it may be seen here also, as it is by a person's rejection of letting God be central in life; instead, humanity is made central. Calvin's definition of pride, therefore, would include Fromm's understanding but then would be still broader. For Calvin, pride can be found in those with low self-esteem as well as those with inflated self-esteem.

Through interpreting Maslow one can see that pride can function as a necessary crutch in life when a traditional understanding of God is not acknowledged. This is not to say that Maslow did not believe in a conception of God. He called God Being.<sup>90</sup> Experiences of life that all people shared, the peak experiences, revealed this Being.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Maslow, Religion, Values, and Peak Experiences, 61.

<sup>91</sup>Lowry, 52.



It is the direction of this inquiry that makes the difference when considering the role of pride. When one discovers God, for Maslow through the peak experience, then there is no compulsion to attribute to that God the characteristics of our own nature or to establish a relationship of a particular type; however, when one sees God as being the Creator of all humanity in the divine image and the one who has bestowed gifts far beyond our deserving, as Calvin saw it, then the only proper response is humility. What Maslow has elaborated upon more than Calvin is the means of understanding the psychological processes of the person who does not acknowledge the reality of God as a creator of life. The elaboration of Maslow points to a differentiation between psychological and spiritual health, a relationship which did not explicitly concern Calvin. While both the psychological and spiritual aspects of life must be combined for wholistic healthy functioning, the psychological may be addressed separately at times, even though the exclusive use of the psychological would be detrimental in pastoral counseling since the reality and primary salogenic power of God could not be used as effectively if the spiritual is ignored. The lacuna in Calvin's perspective regarding the psychological functioning of the unbeliever can once more be seen to be related to his practical emphasis on rectitude over the image of God. His written theology acknowledges the need to see people first of all

as image-bearers and therefore to take into account the expression of the natural elements of the image of God that may still shine forth; however, in his actual care of people we saw his emphasis on rectitude to such a degree that the image concept in the individual was sometimes overlooked. Maslow has looked at these people which Calvin in some ways passed over; yet, due to his lack of theological sensitivity Maslow has not provided satisfactory answers for the issues of growth which he raises. Theological sensitivity to the direction of Calvin's theology provides guidance in a way that was lacking from Calvin's working theology. This guidance tells us to study people where they are, to relate to them where they are. After this people may begin to see more of themselves and their nature than before. This is because they can risk looking at themselves in a context of support. Without the support the risk cannot as easily be taken.

From Maslow's work we see that pride and narcissism, as defined in this study, can be a necessary crutch for many people not in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Theologians and pastors involved in the practice of pastoral care should note this and not try to strip people of their pride and narcissism early in their interactions since these characteristics function as needed defense mechanisms for psychological stability. Rather, the strengths that people can find in

recognizing themselves as image-bearers of God should first be developed so that the psyche has resources with which to deal with a true loss of pride and the subsequent adoption of Christian humility. This approach acknowledges Maslow's observations as valid but goes further than Maslow in integrating important aspects of theology into his perceptions. The dialogue between theology and psychology here produces positive results.

A further question arises as to the responsibility of the church in a culture that experiences the negative effects of a narcissistic culture as described by Lasch. If Maslow and Calvin can speak to this issue the answer must be that the narcissism can be seen as an expression of emotional helath in many ways that still need the input of the spiritual. If a person does not find value in himself or herself because of their relationship to God, it is at least healthier to have the crutch of finding value in oneself through a narcissistic means than to downgrade one's personal value. The specific spiritual input of the church beyond this point is to communicate the message that we live in a reality of grace, grace understood as it was defined in chapter one (page 17). As people begin to recognize that they are experiencing the strength of God in all of their lives they can then be more free to see the origin of goodness outside of themselves, a goodness which will not be removed from them as they study

themselves in more depth. Thus, a process has begun of getting to know both God and ourselves, the beginning of all human knowledge.<sup>92</sup>

The critique of Calvin's thought using Fromm and Maslow has demonstrated that psychology and theology, as defined, can be complementary and bring out needed emphases for each other. Psychology and psychoanalysis cannot deal with and explain all of their observations about humanity. They need interpretation of a kind that only can be provided by theology. When psychologists and psychoanalysts have tried to address the issues of theology by using only psychological tools, the tools have been found insufficient. On the other hand, theology can be informed by psychology's input concerning various aspects of contemporary culture. The relationship of freedom and authority is an issue in our culture upon which theology may focus, although not exclusively, in order that the questions of people may be addressed. It is the research of psychology that may bring these issues to our attention.

Psychoanalysis also shows theologians how theological constructs may be misused by a society. Fromm has clearly pointed this out when he finds that people use theology (in this case, Calvin's) to escape from freedom rather than to find it. A study of Fromm,

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<sup>92</sup>Institutes, 35 (I, 1, 1)

however, also shows that even here the input of theology is needed in order that the concept of freedom may be adequately understood. The tendency of our society to operate shallowly with the concept of freedom when lacking theological input is emphasized by Oden.

The rhetoric of unrestrained individual freedom is a prominent earmark of the spirit of modernity. The goal of modern life is to be liberated from restrictions, constraints, traditions, and all social parenting -- all of which is self-evidently presumed to be dehumanizing. "If we were only free from x or y," modernity fantasizes, "then we could truly be ourselves." So the social, psychological, and political strategies and rhetoric of modernity all focus on a highly abstract notion of individual freedom, abstract because it is taken away from (abs- + trahere) its matrix of social accountability. The hunger of freedom to actualize itself quite individually is the despair of modernity, for authentic freedom exists only amid covenant responsibility. So the freedom of which modernity speaks is seldom authentic freedom, but a yearning, self-negating "fallen" freedom that can only despairingly imagine itself to be free.<sup>93</sup>

Trying to find freedom outside of "covenantal responsibility" only leads to a chase after the idea of freedom which becomes in itself a type of bondage.

One last contribution from psychoanalytic critique is to see that pride and narcissism can function "positively" in a person's life in the sense of providing a context for existence while desiring growth. Whether pride and narcissism psychologically originate from too much self-love or from a lack of self-esteem is not impor-

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<sup>93</sup>T. Oden, Agenda for Theology (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) 37.

tant at this level (cf. p. 204). The important observation is that pride and narcissism may be transformed as a stepping-stone to a higher realization of the presence of God in one's life. In this sense the presence of pride and narcissism are symptomatic of the need for spiritual growth in life. Although recognized in different ways, both theologians as well as psychologists like Maslow are calling for this growth in the lives of people of the twentieth century, a growth which depends on the involvement of the church through the impetus of the Spirit.

#### THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE

We will be concerned here with comparing some of the basic conceptions of Calvin and those of the feminist movement. Since this is not a study designed to demonstrate either the validity of Calvinist or feminist interpretations of scripture, the comparisons made will be solely for the purpose of observing areas in which Calvin's biblical study needs to be extended. A central tenet is the fact that scripture must be used in an address to women's rights issues in order to be faithful to Calvin.<sup>94</sup> Georgia Harkness, while not the best example of feminist biblical scholarship, has looked at

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<sup>94</sup>Bieler, 71.

many of the scriptural passages which refer to the status of women.<sup>95</sup> We will compare her interpretation and relationship of passages with those of Calvin since she deals with a broad sample of the crucial passages concerning women.<sup>96</sup> Harkness is also important because she has been very influential in our society's understanding of Calvin and women's issues even though she is not a feminist in the modern sense of the term. Her value for our purposes also lies in the fact that she is influenced by Calvin's method of studying scripture although she does not follow it well and is not a biblical scholar. Rather than leave a mistaken impression upon many of her readers that this is good Calvinist scholarship, we will use her writing to bring out the issues with which Calvin would be concerned and then show more clearly how he very likely would have addressed the issues she has raised in her biblical attempts at making passages relevant. Harkness is, despite the shortcomings, still a good scholar to use for our purposes since she is not radically at odds

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<sup>95</sup>Harkness, Women in Church and Society lists these passages.

<sup>96</sup>The biblical study of Harkness is used primarily because she seeks to relate together different scriptural passages much as Calvin would. Her actual use of exegetical tools is inferior to studies like that of P. Tribble, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); however, Tribble's work does not cover as many of the primary passages as Harkness does and therefore fails to relate passages in a way which Calvin would consider crucial. There is a lack in the feminist writing of integrating good biblical scholarship with good hermeneutical principle.

with Calvin in her hermeneutical method as compared to some other feminist scholars. Although the goal of this study is only to show that Calvin, properly understood, may be a stimulus in the feminist discussion, we will, nevertheless, give an example later of how Calvin very likely would use modern scholarship in addressing a contemporary issue as based on Genesis 3:14-19.

To speak of the feminist movement requires a definition with which we may operate. Harkness' summarization and definition can be used:

The women's movement is more than a struggle for "women's rights," though it contains this element. It is essentially a struggle for the recognition of women as persons of equal worth and status with men, and with equal opportunities according to their talents, training, and various forms of ability. In its more authentic forms it does not deny or disparage the fact of biological differences between the sexes, with each needing the other, nor seek to repudiate the special obligations and duties which result from a woman's role in childbearing and motherhood. What it does protest is the too common assumption that these are a woman's only significant functions with subordination to men because of an innate inferiority in everything else.<sup>97</sup>

From this general definition we see that the issue of equality plays a major role in the discussion. The issue of equality is even more emphasized in the church as one considers the message of the church. "By a curious paradox, the church has long declared the equality of all persons before God, . . . Yet in the church itself,

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<sup>97</sup>Harkness, 13.



conservatism has prevailed in regard to the place of women in its leadership."<sup>98</sup> One area of consideration in a feminist critique must be the conception of equality as it functions in scripture. A primary passage here will be Galatians 3:28.

Bieler notes how Calvin himself understands the basis for the equality of which he speaks:

By giving them back their humanness, Christ makes it possible that man and woman find themselves again face to face. Only the daily intervention of Christ can restore the couple which by nature is divided. And Christ eliminates man's tendencies to consider woman as inferior. In Christ there is no longer man and woman.<sup>99</sup>

Theology must listen to and have something to say to the feminist movement if it is to remain relevant for the proponents of this movement in our society. Bieler provides a model of how Calvin can address a contemporary issue by studying Calvin in relation to social and economic thought. The use of Calvin in addressing the feminist issues will follow a similar pattern. Bieler's technique can be seen as imitative of Calvin himself whose technique he describes:

. . . (Calvin) did not intend to constitute a body of doctrines to remain valid for all times. His ambition was to understand all the aspects of the Word of God and to translate it most completely into the lives of men living in a definite period of history.

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>99</sup>Bieler, 20.

. . . Our faithfulness to Calvin therefore does not permit us merely and lazily to repeat mechanically his words in a new historical situation. It requires, on the contrary, that Christians make in their new circumstances the effort of submission to the Word of God in all things, following Calvin's magnificent example.<sup>100</sup>

As the counterpoint to Calvin we now study the approach of Georgia Harkness more explicitly. Although Harkness is familiar with Calvin<sup>101</sup>, it has already been demonstrated that she misread and misinterpreted him at crucial points. She speaks of the problems of equality in the church as Calvin did but addresses these problems differently. Harkness does recognize and notes the necessary input of theology to the feminist issue:<sup>102</sup>

Everybody knows also, or should know, that the Christian gospel stands for the equality of all persons before God. These matters, and what to do with their apparent contradiction, have been taken up in a number of other books on women in the church. However, I have found little that attempts to give a comprehensive theological study of these and other related issues. But unless we build from firm theological foundations, how shall we find the right guidelines?<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>101</sup>Harkness, John Calvin is the clearest example.

<sup>102</sup>Although Harkness recognizes this as essential, other feminists do not in the sense of using traditional theological understandings. Probably the foremost spokeswoman here is M. Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973)

<sup>103</sup>Harkness, Women in Church and Society, 8.

One of the primary guidelines must be equality according to Harkness and her understanding of the gospel message. Harkness sees many instances of Jesus raising women to a position of equality in his ministry.<sup>104</sup> She, however, mainly uses inference from the accounts of Jesus' interactions. More concrete are the teachings of Paul. Harkness' basic understanding of Paul is seen in her following statement:

In this outpouring of Paul's loving concern [a greeting] for both his male and female friends, doubtless all of whom had "worked hard in the Lord," there is no hint of condescension toward women or of a desire to subordinate or silence them. Apparently he not only accepted but encouraged and warmly appreciated the women of the churches. Such words as have been quoted cohere completely with the magnificent statement of racial, cultural, and sex equality in Christ which we find in his letter to the Galatian church: For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-28)<sup>105</sup>

When Calvin considers this passage in his commentary he shows all the signs of being involved in the issues of the sixteenth-century. He speaks mainly of the issue of baptism as putting on Christ. The clause speaking of equality he treats almost as a side-light considering the amount of attention he gives to it. His entire

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 57-61.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 67-68.

consideration of it in his commentary is:

The meaning is that there is no distinction of persons, and therefore it does not matter to what nation or class anyone may belong. Nor is circumcision any more regarded than sex or civil rank. Why? Because Christ makes all one. Whatever other differences there may be, the one Christ suffices to unite them all.

Therefore he says, Ye are one, and means by this that the distinction is now removed. His object is to show that the grace of adoption and the hope of salvation do not depend on the law but are contained in Christ alone. The one Christ therefore is all.<sup>106</sup>

What can be seen from Calvin's comments is a tendency to think of the equality as being demonstrative of the state of salvation. The aspect of one's salvation would rise above class, sex, civil rank and race. Nevertheless, even in the state of equality before God concerning salvation, Calvin appears to still see the realities of Jew and Greek biologically, slave and free socially, and male and female physically and in relation to roles.

The role of women in the sixteenth century was in flux even though it was not the primary issue of the Reformers. Calvin's contributions to this issue have been studied by Douglass.<sup>107</sup> She finds that Calvin's notion of Christian freedom is integral to properly understanding his discussions of order in society and the church. This conception of freedom in relationship to order is drawn from

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<sup>106</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 69, 3:28.

<sup>107</sup>Douglass, "Calvin and the People of God"

the early confessions of the church and has a direct bearing on the roles and actions of the sexes.

In several confessions, all of them very early chronologically, the advice of Paul concerning conduct in the church, such as women covering their heads, is specifically referred to as an example of salutary and useful tradition but still not binding so as to be necessary to salvation or an occasion for sin unless others were offended: . . . So we see that Calvin, in successive editions of the Institutes, continues to talk of the provisional character of Paul's advice, divine though it may be, long after this point has dropped out of the confessions. And only in Calvin, among sixteenth-century writers, have I so far found the explicit suggestion that Paul's advice for women to be silent in the church should be considered in the category of traditions which are to be accommodated to the customs of each nation and age.<sup>108</sup>

Obviously, Calvin did not consider the injunctions of certain passages to be binding as regards external matters such as women covering their heads and silence of women in the church. This must not, however, bring into question Calvin's commitment to the inspiration of all of scripture.

Calvin believed that no matter how the scriptures were gathered, it was the Holy Spirit that was the final author and included what was necessary. A case of this principle in operation is seen in Calvin's consideration of the statement of Paul in I Corinthians 7:12 where Paul wrote, "But to the rest I say, not the Lord, . . . ."

But why is it that Paul makes himself the source of these rules when they seem to conflict to some extent with those which he had

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 8.

just given above as from the Lord? He does not mean that they come from himself in such a way that the Spirit of God has nothing to do with them. But, since there was no clear and explicit statement on this subject in any part of the Law and the prophets, in this way he sought to prevent the ungodly from making false accusation about him, by taking personal responsibility for what he was about to say. Yet, so that it might not all be airily dismissed as the product of a human brain, he will afterwards say that his statements are not his mere subjective fancies.<sup>109</sup>

Similarly Calvin speaks to Paul's phrase ". . . I have no command of the Lord: but I give my judgement." (I Corinthians 7:25)

Paul says that he is giving advice, and he does not mean that it is problematic, with little or no certainty about it, but that it is definite and should be adhered to without question.<sup>110</sup>

In both of the above instances we see that even when Paul said that he did not have command of the Lord the injunctions were still binding since they agreed with the rest of scripture and the teachings of Christ. Nevertheless, as Douglass notes, Calvin recognized that the advice of Paul was for Paul's day and not for all eternity.<sup>111</sup> For Calvin, the message of Paul was inspired and it spoke to the churches to which it was addressed. For us the message is also inspired and useful, although not by woodenly following forms which are now empty (such as it being shameful for a man to have long

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<sup>109</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1960) 147, 7:12.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 155 (on verse 25)

<sup>111</sup>Douglass, "Calvin and the People of God", 14.

hair, requiring hats on women and banning make-up and jewelry). Rather than woodenly following forms, we must let the message of scripture communicate to us the timeless truths of God's revelation. This timelessness of truth is why Genesis is also important as revelation just as the New Testament even though much has occurred in the history and development of redemption between Genesis and Revelation. Issues of timeless significance that are crucial for Calvin in his manner of exegeting scripture are indicated in the Genesis account of creation.

In the creation account of Genesis one, Calvin understands "Man" generically. He emphasizes the point that it must be understood this way since the male is incomplete by himself.<sup>112</sup> The mutuality in the relationship of male and female is seen by Calvin since both male and female are obviously lords of the creation.<sup>113</sup> He also sees the account in Genesis two, to be explicative of Genesis one, defining the relationship between the sexes themselves more explicitly.<sup>114</sup>

Calvin does not feel comfortable with an interpretation that

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<sup>112</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 96-97, 1:27.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 129, 2:18.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 111, 2:7.

makes man the much more excellent creation over the woman. His emphasis lies more on the perceived roles that have been commanded.

Observe his discussion on this matter:

I will make him an help. It may be inquired, why this is not said in the plural number, Let us make, as before in the creation of man. Some suppose that a distinction between the two sexes is in this manner marked, and that it is thus shown how much the man excels the woman. But I am better satisfied with an interpretation which, though not altogether contrary, is yet different; namely, since in the person of man the human race had been created, the common dignity of our whole nature was without distinction, honoured with one eulogy, when it was said, "Let us make man;" nor was it necessary to be repeated in creating the woman, who was nothing else than an accession to the man.<sup>115</sup>

Although Calvin will not be a party to degrading the value of a woman, he still finds that there are God-ordained roles in life for the sexes. The role of the woman is to be a helper to man as a part of their vocation. The order of nature even shows us that the woman should be the helper of man so that he may live well, being completed in her.<sup>116</sup> Calvin does recognize that this presents a problem in society but finds this to be a problem of the fall of humanity. If there had been no fall, then the marriage relationship would presumably have been one of harmony and oneness rather than strife.<sup>117</sup> Here we note the emphasis earlier mentioned by Douglass of the centrality

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 129, 2:18.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.



of the marriage relationship for the Reformers.<sup>118</sup> Calvin did not often consider the role of the single woman or of women without connection to their husbands. Marriage was re-interpreted so as to become liberating to women of the sixteen century<sup>119</sup>; outside of this relationship Calvin does not speak in this passage. A further extension of Calvin's thought must be formed here just as was needed in the Galatians passage. It appears that the use of Calvin's theological framework allows for this development in a way that would be relevant to our society. The development itself is a project of such scope that it must await a study of its own.

Harkness treats the passages in Genesis as crucial to women but does so in a manner that does not follow the principles of interpretation which have been seen in Calvin. Her basic position concerning the first creation account is summed up by a paraphrase of the words, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'" The paraphrase which Harkness quotes is:

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<sup>118</sup>Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation", 297.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 303.

He created man, male and female man, and called their name Adam, and to this male and female man, whom he called Adam, He gave all things, and bade this man Adam, male and female, to subdue all things, even the world, to themselves.<sup>120</sup>

Harkness supports this statement by saying:

No doubt this statement appeared to many as heretical as did the Women's Bible! But it states unequivocally that in this crucial passage of the creation story about the origin of Man [capital indicates generic for Harkness] both male and female were involved.<sup>121</sup>

The crucial issue of the second creation account (which Harkness finds in Genesis two) is consideration of the phrase that woman was made a "helper", "helpmeet", or "partner" for man. Here Harkness says that ". . . the term "helper" carries no opprobrium when it does not suggest servitude."<sup>122</sup> However she does not find that this author (J -- the Yahwist) suggests equality.

Nevertheless, I do not think that we can absolve the J author from the assumption that women were created for the sake of men. Do what we will with the rib story, it carries this implication. It is corroborated by Adam's blaming Eve for his transgression in eating the forbidden fruit instead of assuming his own responsibility.<sup>123</sup>

The primary emphasis that Harkness finds in this passage, however, is that partnership must be central in the relationship of men and

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<sup>120</sup>Harkness, Women in Church and Society, 147.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 147-148.      <sup>122</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

and women. The story notes some obvious differences in the sexes which must remain but which should not be made exclusive.

The breadwinning of the male and the childbearing of the female are important obligations, not to be treated lightly. But they are not the only obligation of either sex. If they are made into exclusive pursuits, there is a distortion of the partnership. In many spheres of human activity, men and women can fruitfully cooperate. But while this basic truth is being emphasized, as it needs to be in our time, the other side of it must not be lost. If sexual differences are disregarded to the point where women disclaim their femininity and men their male responsibilities, everybody loses.<sup>124</sup>

What Harkness sees in these two passages is complementary emphasis. It might be summed up in the phrase that men and women are equal and unique.

Harkness goes on to study I Corinthians 14:34-35. She interprets this passage as culturally conditioned in a manner similar to Calvin. She notes that hetaerae, high-class prostitutes in Corinth, spoke in public and were unveiled -- contrary to the custom for married women. In response to this Paul tells the Christian women to keep silence in the church in order that they not be confused with these prostitutes.<sup>125</sup> Although Calvin does not speak of these prostitutes, he also sees this passage as culturally conditioned. He wrote:

It appears that the Corinthian church was also spoiled by this fault, that when they met together, there was a place for the

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 53.

chattering of women, or rather it was allowed great liberty. Paul accordingly forbids them to speak in public, either by way of teaching or prophesying. But we should understand this as referring to the situation where things can be done in the regular way, or where the Church is well established. For a situation can arise where there is a need of such kind as calls for woman to speak.<sup>126</sup>

The recognition of cultural conditioning, however, does not lead Calvin to also interpret the subjection clause as a cultural response. Here he finds that even if women can speak they should still be in subjection.<sup>127</sup> The command of subjection, however, must be kept in the scriptural context of mutual subjection to one another (Ephesians 5:21). This retaining of the concept of subjection is consistent with Calvin's interpretation of Genesis two; if Genesis two did not teach subjection, then it might be possible that subjection also was a cultural injunction here. This, of course, could not be done unless other relevant passages of scripture concerning women could be interpreted in the same way. In any case, subjection is a worldly structure which will not be a necessary part of the coming (and already present in measure) kingdom of Christ.

Harkness lists the passages which have prevented women from serving in the church. Of these passages she says that Paul was

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<sup>126</sup>Calvin, Commentary on I Corinthians, 306, 14:33-34.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

certainly the author of the books of Corinthians but maybe not the others attributed to him.<sup>128</sup> With this statement Calvin would disagree since the text of Timothy, as one example, specifically says that Paul was the author. It appears that Calvin never even questioned this authorship. Even if he would have allowed that Paul was not the author, he still would have to deal with the passages as a part of scripture given through the inspiration of the Spirit. Of the Corinthian passages, Harkness believes that the rabbinical background of Paul is coming through and perverting the Christian implications of his message.

Of individual women, Paul could speak highly and gratefully and feel with them a fine fellowship in Christ. But of the man-woman relation, he spoke his inherited rather than his Christian conviction when he said that as the head of man is Christ, so the head of woman is her husband, and that man is the image and glory of God while woman is the glory of man.<sup>129</sup>

Calvin might agree to this, but once more he would find that this made little difference in regard to taking the passage as the truth of God which directed humanity to a better ordering of life.

A study of Harkness has provided two points at which the theology of Calvin may contribute to feminist understanding. First, Calvin could not have used his exegetical skills to exhaustively address issues relevant to our culture in his analysis of what we

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<sup>128</sup>Harkness, Women in Church and Society, 69.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 71.

perceive to be key passages. This we must do. It entails a more complete study of these passages using Calvin's principles of exegesis. Secondly, a primary focus in a study of these passages would be on order and its implications as they originate in Genesis. Order functions as a primary concept for Calvin but it is not one he addresses exhaustively in relationship to the role of women. This study, of course, would have to include a careful analysis of the relationship of order to the image of God since this is a tension which has been seen to arise in many aspects of Calvin's work. Research of this nature would have to be extensive considering the breadth and integration of Calvin's thought; however it is enough at this point to note that a possible contribution can be made by logical extension and use of Calvin's thought to the feminist movement and therefore to the pastoral care of women. It also has been seen that the emphases of the feminists call for a sharpening of theological development which can come from scriptural exegesis as taught by Calvin. The interdisciplinary benefits of study once more are demonstrated in this way.

In Contrast to the exegetical work that has been done by Harkness, we may present an example of exegetical work which would be more consistent with the approach of Calvin. The passage used as an example is Genesis 3:14-19 with a specific focus on verse 16, the verse about the judgment on women. The interpretation offered here is

consistent with Calvin's commitment to use the latest and best valid scholarship in order to interpret the scriptures while also letting the scriptures interpret themselves by way of their internal consistency. The study of Genesis 3:14-19 will be written in the form of a separate article or commentary so that it will depend only upon its internal construction for its validity and not upon the discussion which has already taken place in this study.

#### Analysis of Genesis 3:14-19

Contemporary discussions of the feminist movement within the Christian church legitimately look to the Bible as a guide for how men should relate to women and vice-versa. Of primary importance in this discussion is the interpretation of Genesis 3:16 where God pronounces a judgment upon women. This verse is typically translated in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible:

To the women he said,  
I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing,  
in pain you shall bring forth children;  
yet your desire shall be for your husband,  
and he shall rule over you.

Of particular importance for us is the phrase,

. ואל-אישך חשוקתך והוא ימשל-בך

Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of this phrase have been promoted by both supporters and opponents of feminism. An under-

standing of the text must be established which enables one to clearly delineate the proper implications of this material. This will be done by studying the context of this passage, the etymology and usage of the crucial words, and through an analysis of the poetical form.

Central to understanding this verse of scripture is the meaning of חַשׁוּקָה. Susan T. Foh has done some preliminary work on the meaning of this word and lists three common interpretations.<sup>130</sup>

(1) It is equated with sexual desire. This relates חַשׁוּקָה to the preceding phrase concerning childbirth and leads to translations such as the RSV which renders the initial waw of the phrase as "yet" rather than the preferable "and".

(2) חַשׁוּקָה is a desire which the woman has to be subject to the man. This interprets the word by reference to the phrase of the husbands' ruling.

"(3) Calvin states that Genesis 3:16b means that the woman will desire only what her husband desires and that she will have no command over herself."<sup>131</sup>

In all of these interpretations the woman's desire is to be ruled

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<sup>130</sup>S. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" Westminster Theological Journal, XXXVII (1974-1975) 376-377.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., cf. J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) I, 172, 3:16.



by her husband in some manner. However the natural question then arises as to whether this is normative for a relationship. There is good logic in the argument that modern society should try rid itself of this subjection of women just as it seeks to alleviate pain in childbirth through the use of medication and relieves the problems of thorns and thistles through the use of weed-killers. This logic, however, is not based on a thorough understanding of this passage. Specifically, the word חשוקה has traditionally been poorly exegeted and consequently the passage has been misused.

#### A. The Meaning of חשוקה

חשוקה comes from the root חשק which is used only three times in the Old Testament (Genesis 3:16, Genesis 4:7, Song of Solomon 7:10 - vs. 11 in Hebrew). Due to this limited usage a definition of the word cannot be determined by a comparison of usages alone; nevertheless, some initial indication of meaning may be given in examining these contexts. Specifically the usage in Genesis 4:7 would be expected to be helpful since it occurs only a few verses away from the one which we are considering.

In Genesis 4:7, God is speaking to Cain and we find the identical usage of חשוקה as found in Genesis 3:16. The traditional understanding of Genesis 4:7 is that sin's desire is to control or enslave Cain.

There is a struggle implied between sin and Cain. When comparing these passages, Foh states, "The woman has the same sort of desire for her husband that sin has for Cain, a desire to possess or control him."<sup>132</sup> To translate חשוקה in Genesis 3:16 as in Genesis 4:7 does indicate this meaning but can be supported only as hypothesis.<sup>133</sup> More evidence is needed to establish this translation as the correct interpretation.

#### B. Support from Context

The immediate context of verse 16 is the poem which covers verses 14-19. Here God pronounces his judgment upon the serpent (14-15), the woman (16), and the man (17-19). What is the judgment upon the serpent? It is no longer to be able to occupy a place of esteem, it will be bowered to crawl on its belly and eat dust. The serpent, which is Satan (Revelation 20:2) is fallen and condemned to a losing conflict with the seed of the woman. It is conflict that will result in defeat for Satan only by the instrumentality of a Redeemer. The judgment of the serpent is then both a lowering of status and power and a resulting conflict in which loss is certain. It is a conflict with

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 381.

<sup>133</sup>The passage in Song of Solomon 7:10 can be translated with the proposed meaning without difficulty. Context offers no support.

God (through Jesus Christ) in whom the serpent originally found its being.

A theme of conflict precedes the judgment of the woman but also follows the passage of judgment on the woman. Just as the serpent was condemned to conflict, so the man was condemned to conflict. The man would be in conflict with the ground from which he was created. It would bring forth thorns and thistles and would require the sweat of his brow in order to be productive. It is of note, however, that the man was in conflict with the ground as his judgment and not condemned to an eternal conflict with the Creator as was the serpent.

In the midst of the above two themes of conflict we find the judgment of the woman. As traditionally understood there is no conflict involved in this passage. If, however, חשוקה is translated as desire to possess or control, then we find the woman condemned to conflict with her husband (from whom she was created) just as the man was condemned to conflict with the ground (from which he was created) and in a manner similar to the conflict of the serpent with God (who created him). The context indicates support for translating חשוקה as desire to possess or control in that the translation gives a consistent theme to the passage while also indicating the messianic significance of verse 15 in that the man and woman were not condemned



consonant with the interpretation [proposed]. . . .<sup>137</sup>

Driver finds even further support for the more active meaning of *השוקה* when, in discussion Genesis 4:7, he wrote, "Further, the meaning of *השוקה* is not 'desire' but 'impulse, urge', as Symmachus knows and the cognate Arabic verb proves."<sup>138</sup>

It appears that the traditional understanding of *השוקה* may have been formed on the basis of theological commitments to the passivity of women rather than etymological indication. The actual Arabic phonetic, *sāqa*, is more consistent with the interpretation that has been proposed as well as being recognized as preferable etymologically by scholars.

#### D. Support from the Structure of Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry uses as one element of its composition the parallelism of its lines in order to develop the meaning being presented. This parallelism can be totally synonymous in that the second line repeats the first. An example of this is Psalm 105:23.

Then Israel / came	/ to Egypt;	ויבא ישראל מצרים
Jacob	/ sojourned / in the land of Ham.	ויעקב גר בארץ-חם

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<sup>137</sup>Foh, 378.

<sup>138</sup>Driver, "Notes and Studies", 158.

This arrangement can be represented as:

a / b / c

$$a' \quad / \quad b' \quad / \quad c'$$

A variation on this arrangement is an incomplete parallelism such as the first phrase of Genesis 3:16.

a                      b                      c

I will multiply / your pain / in childbearing,

הַרְבֵּה אַרְבֵּה עֲצָבוֹנָךְ וְהִרְנָךְ

b'                      c'  
in pain / you shall bring forth children.

בעצב תלדי בנים

One other form of parallelism related to the passage at hand is chiasmic parallelism. This involves an inversion of lines or meaning. An example of this is found in Isaiah 11:13b.

a                      b                      c  
Ephraim / shall not be jealous / of Judah,

אפרים לא-יִקְנא את-יהודה

c'                      b'                      a'  
and Judah / shall not harass / Ephraim.

וַיִּהְיוּדָה לֹא-יָצַר אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם

With this brief background let us examine the poetry of Genesis 3:16. As seen with the example of incomplete parallelism, the first two lines of the poem in verse 16 are good Hebrew poetry. The poetical analysis, however, begins to have more significance



structural, synonymous parallelism. Poetry is a verbal form which at least partially can serve as a mnemonic device to enhance memory. From this perspective we see a certain conceptual chiasmic emphasis: you want to control but he will control. The poem demonstrates structural parallelism with a conceptual chiasmic meaning. In effect, a revised translation of חֲשׂוֹקָה changes a mediocre or poor Hebrew poem into a beautiful example of Hebrew poetry.

An examination of Song of Solomon 7:10 (11 in Hebrew) also improves the structure of this poem if the proposed meaning of חֲשׂוֹקָה is accepted. As traditionally translated the poem has little more than some metre to hold it together.

I belong / to my beloved,

אני לדודי

and for me / is his desire.

ועלי חֲשׂוֹקָהוּ

If, however, we use the proposed meaning the verse would be translated as:

I belong / to my beloved,

and over me / is his desire to rule.

Here we once more find an example of a chiasmic parallelism in meaning structured around the concept of the unity of the bride and bridegroom. Once more, with the new translation, a very mediocre Hebrew poem has been turned into a much better example of Hebrew poetry.



### E. Conclusion concerning Genesis 3:16

The evidence for translating חָשׂוֹקָה as "desire to rule or control" is compelling. The meaning is supported by 1) an analysis of the immediate context of Genesis 3:16, 2) etymological study, and 3) poetical analysis. Also, the meaning can be used in all passages where חָשׂוֹקָה is found. Other translations of חָשׂוֹקָה find it necessary to vary the meaning of the word depending upon which of the three passages is used. Genesis 3:16b should be translated, therefore, as:

and you will desire to control your husband,

and he will rule over you.

What we now see is the conflict to which the marriage relationship will be subjected. This verse of itself does not present any normative rules of correct relationship or role expectations; rather, it only says that there will be conflict. The issue of headship must be determined by other Biblical passages and then the relationship to this passage may be seen more clearly.

### INDICATED COUNSELING PROCESS

The critiques and study of Calvin in this chapter have shown us that Calvin can still be studied profitably in the twentieth century.

It has also shown that his thought needs to be extended, critiqued, and revised to meet the needs of our culture. It has shown us, most importantly, an implicit way with which to deal with people who need the ministry of the church. This implicit practical methodology will be described a bit more specifically here and then more practically presented and analyzed in the next chapter.

The starting point for our pastoral care and counseling must be the recognition that we are dealing with human beings created in the image of God. As Calvin said, therefore, we dare not despise people or take their needs lightly. Rather, we explore their problems and their strengths with them, particularly emphasizing the strengths while still recognizing the failings in the initial stages of contact. When the strengths, which are attributable to the presence of the image of God, are recognized, then a person begins to explore how to use these strengths to solve the problems or face the life situations which confront them. The recognition, either implicitly or explicitly, of the benefits of the strength of the image of God communicates hope to the person receiving the ministry of the church. Possibly for the first time a person begins to see that there is the possibility of grace operating for himself or herself as a real part of existence. It is at this point in the process of ministry, however, that a recognition begins to form that many people have formerly

considered negative. This is a recognition that one is not capable of using or developing the tremendous potential which has been seen in oneself by mere willpower. Something beyond is needed.

Although not expressed as such, this "something beyond" is also what Fromm and Maslow have called for in counseling. The "something beyond" which is offered in pastoral counseling is the power of God which is expressed through Jesus Christ. This involves the church which is the body of Jesus Christ in our world. There is power found in the resource of Jesus Christ and the church into which a troubled person can tap. The resources of Christian community was one which Calvin used already in Geneva in the political sphere as well as the church. The Little Council was a political body that was closely related to the Consistory, a church body, by the fact that the elders in the Consistory were nominated by the Little Council.<sup>140</sup> The Consistory and Little Council, therefore, often worked closely together which at times caused consternation among the ministers of Geneva. The ministers of Geneva met in a group in order to offer each other correction, support, and encourage growth in their offices and persons. This apparently worked so well that the group structure was recommended for the Little Council, the

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<sup>140</sup>J. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) 163.

political council which earlier had taken over the powers of the exiled bishop of Geneva. McNeill notes the development of this group structure.

He [Calvin] later induced the Little Council to establish the custom of stated meetings of its members for mutual correction. This plan, manifestly imitative of the ministers' assembly, was brought into operation by the Council 10 December 1557. The minutes record a decision to hold meetings for this purpose monthly or quarterly as may prove expedient. All must attend, prepared frankly to air their criticisms of one another but to guard carefully the spirit of charity and brotherly love, 'that the grace of God may be present with us.' A solemn pledge of secrecy was imposed; to reveal the transactions of the meeting would incur the penalty for perjury. In the record of a meeting of 2 March 1558 there is a reference to fraternal correction uttered in love and charity, each man freely exposing the others' defects and faults. Calvin was trying to make of the magistracy a Christian fraternity or society for mutual criticism and improvement. This assembly for fraternal correction was called the grabeau.<sup>141</sup>

The grabeau did not continue in the political life of Geneva but the concept did find a lasting place in the company of pastors in Geneva and later in the church consistories themselves. A significant pastoral contribution of Calvin to the church is thus seen in his establishment of fraternal correction between the elders and pastors which was expressive of "love and charity". The enduring quality of this contribution is seen in that the principle of the grabeau has remained and has found its way into the church order of a

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 187.

contemporary Reformed church. The church order of the Christian Reformed Church states, "The consistory, at least four times per year, shall exercise mutual censure, which concerns the performance of the official duties of the office-bearers."<sup>142</sup> This "mutual censure" is for much the same purpose as originally envisioned by Calvin, that of helping the elders and ministers in their shared responsibility of the pastoral care of the church community.

More recently the idea of the supportive, caring group, a growth group, has been more thoroughly developed and presented as an option for the laity of the church as well. This, in some ways, is an extension of Calvin's means of ministry which is of great probable and possible importance. Possibly the lack of the development of these groups before could have been due to different social situations which pre-empted their need; however, the similarities of the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, which have been noted earlier, clearly show a renewed need for this type of ministry in the church.

The implications of Calvin's approach do not confine themselves exclusively to the community setting. It is very possible to minister to someone who is very hostile to the church and its members by developing a personal contact outside of the group setting. There

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<sup>142</sup> Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church (Grand Rapids: Board of Publications, 1972) 8.

will of necessity, however, come a point at which the person will feel a need for the community support of the group if all proceeds well. This will be seen more clearly in the case studies of the subsequent chapter which will present an example of a very hostile person being counseled in the manner described as well as an example of one who was less hostile and found more help in the community of the church.

## Chapter V

### CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS

The case studies presented in this chapter will not be presented in the more usual ways but will follow the pattern set forth in the previous chapters. This means that verbatims will not play a primary role in the reporting and also that specific techniques or tools will not be a primary focus. Rather, the conscious use of a theological framework based upon Calvin's theology will be the focus of the inquiry along with the benefits that this use may have upon the counselee. The use of this theology as a framework implies that various techniques may be used in actual counseling sessions themselves although the counselor may wish to delineate the philosophical presuppositions of these techniques and then, according to the counselor's presuppositions, adjust the techniques accordingly. This use of framework and technique is saying that the framework is concerned about WHAT the counseling is to do and the techniques is the HOW to accomplish the WHAT. The WHAT gives the goals and the HOW gives means to get to the goals. The focus here is upon the WHAT; however, we must not forget that the WHAT needs the HOW in order to be effective. In the same way the HOW may have little value

unless there is some purpose and direction in mind.

Two separate cases will be presented in this chapter. One of these cases concerns a woman who had extensive counseling prior to her contact with me and still had serious problems at the time we began counseling. She insisted upon seeing a male counselor because of some associations with women in her past that influenced her ability to relate to other women in the present. The other case presented also concerns a woman; however, this time I worked in conjunction with other therapists -- one of whom was a woman who could function more effectively as a role model for this client. This woman had problems relating to and being used by men and, therefore, profited from seeing a male and female counselor in relationship to each other.

Each of the cases will be analyzed as they are presented. After this the similarities and differences will be observed and analyzed separately.

#### ANN

Ann came to me, as a pastor, for counseling due to the fact that she could not afford to continue seeing her previous counselor, a psychiatrist. She had been supported by outside funds that were now unavailable and knew that she needed to continue talking to someone.



She initially made it clear to me that she was seeing me only for the reason that she could not afford to see anyone else and that she despised religion, church people, and God. Although her hostility became readily apparent in a few sessions, it seemed very likely that she also recognized the need to deal with some of the conflicts in the religious area of her life. This can be assumed because she could have found other counselors to talk with who would have charged her a very minimal fee.

When Ann came in, her primary complaint was that she was frequently punishing herself. She described the punishments as extremely painful and believed herself to be very masochistic. In the initial interview she would not describe the kinds of punishment in which she was involved. In later sessions, however, she became more open to the idea of sharing new information and would become explicit in speaking of what she had previously avoided. The composite of information obtained after several sessions of counseling is presented here in a more unified structure.

Ann was 47 years old when she came to me for counseling. Her history of problems went back 35 years. She recalled her life with her parents as being one of fear of punishment and growing up in a very strict home. The demands were heavy to behave as one should in order to avoid suffering the punishments of hell after one died.

She recalled that her parents were first of all members of a "very fundamentalist" Baptist church and then later joined a Presbyterian church of which they only seemed to be nominal members. Even so, Ann was sent to Sunday School regularly, and there she said she remembered the stories of the punishments of hell. Her first "nervous breakdown" occurred when she was 14 years old. For her, this meant a loss of an ability to demonstrate appropriate emotions, which resulted in being placed in a state mental hospital by her parents. She recalls becoming very hostile at this time towards everything her former life represented.

Ann spent approximately two years in the hospital. She does not remember it being eventful, but she believes that she was usually heavily drugged. After two years she was released but felt like she moved in a cloud for a time until her medication was cut down. It is remarkable that Ann was able to continue her schooling throughout this period, although she did not recognize this as an achievement. She was very happy to be able to leave home and go to a junior college as soon as she finished high school.

When she left home Ann thought that her life would take a new and positive course. Instead she became involved in other serious problems. In her first year in college she identified with one of her female teachers. This teacher returned the interest and became

friends with Ann. They went out together "on the town" regularly and decided to live together. Soon after Ann moved in with the teacher a sexual relationship began. Ann denied her feelings of guilt over this relationship at the time and believed that she had really found the way for happiness to be present in her life. The outward actions at this time spoke differently. Ann cut her hair very short, styled as college boys would style their hair. She dressed in mens' clothes and assumed the character of a boy. She was not a man in this relationship but rather saw herself as the little boy who would do anything that the teacher told her to do. After several months of being the little boy in the relationship, Ann saw the teacher take another teaching position that moved her away from the area. She did not take Ann along and broke off the relationship. Ann felt lost and within a few weeks had her second "nervous breakdown". This time the breakdown was characterized by confusion and hearing voices. The voices sometimes seemed to originate with various animals she would see but the message was always the same; she was wicked, damned, and would undoubtedly go to hell. She was found wandering the streets and brought to another state hospital where she remained for almost 20 years with brief periods of release. At the age when she experienced menopause, she improved enough so that she was released on an out-

patient basis. Ann herself did not recognize that the improvement of her mental and emotional condition coincided with this time of menopause. At the time she saw me she had been an outpatient for about 9 years without a relapse to inpatient status. Because of a cutback in funds to the outpatient clinic, she had to be either released or returned to the hospital when she came to see me. She decided that she would try to make it on her own with the help of a different counselor.

Ann belonged to a Unitarian church during our time of counseling. She was a member there because she found it gave her contact with people. Also she said that the church she went to let her believe anything she wanted and that it actually functioned more as a social club and a place for contacts. She wanted to be a part of a church that had nothing to do with the perversions she remembered from childhood which, for her, meant an over emphasis on hell, judgment, and good works.

Although Ann did a minimal amount of volunteer work at the church, she did not otherwise have any productive activities on which to spend her time. She said she could not work because it made her too nervous and she just had to leave. For a long time she refused to even talk about any kind of productive activity for herself; rather, she would threaten to leave a counseling session if she could

not talk about something else.

The goals Ann set for herself were 1) to develop a heterosexual relationship, 2) to live more responsibly and independently, and 3) to stop punishing herself. The first two goals are self-explanatory; the third can use elaboration. The punishment, while a very real experience for her, was mainly a mental persecution of herself rather than a physical punishment to which she would subject herself. She would describe punishment as a compulsive swinging of her foot that she could not stop or else a continual tapping of her hand. Usually it would be a small motion that she believed she had no control over. Her experience was that it would come and go without warning and seemed to be influenced by none of her external actions. Her experience was like that of a demon tormenting her except that she had refused to believe in demons any longer. To speak with her at any length about this punishment soon proved to be counter-productive since she had spent endless hours talking about this with her former psychiatrist and at this point could give endless psychological causes and explanations of what she was doing. Yet in the end she was mystified by what it was and why none of her knowledge had helped her.

Early in our counseling I saw that Ann believed that she would be rejected by me because of her past lesbian associations. Rather

than rejecting her, I sympathized with her concerning the suffering she went through at this time. Although I did not approve of the lesbian relationships, I rarely spoke of this to her since she already was condemning herself for these actions. She also expected my judgement for her not being a productive working member of society. Here I emphasized that her just being was more important than what she was doing at this point in life. She expected me to refuse to see her if I could not bring up God in the sessions and asked why I still would see her. I replied that I could only tell her that if she would allow me to use the idea of God for a few moments. She agreed, and I told her that even if she refused to believe in God I still believed that she was created in the image of God and therefore had tremendous potential. This scared her as she thought she would have to use this potential. I assured her that the decision to use of her abilities must be her own but that I saw her because I thought she had potential to reach the goals she had outlined. I had no need to go any faster than she was able.

In the process of counseling I began to emphasize some of the strengths that I saw in her character that she was not acknowledging. These were an above average mental ability which came through in her conversation and her ability to have gone to school successfully as a young adult in the midst of all of her problems; her incredible

commitment towards continued growth in her life and the desire to become "more normal" (as she termed it) after having been in a mental hospital for as many years as she had; her ability to drive a car and have some people depend on her to be a part of their lives when she met them in a coffee-shop. The examples of strengths are, I believe, almost endless in almost all cases of counseling. Ann began to see herself in this more positive light and interpreted herself as less of a failure. She began to make comments like, "I do do some pretty worthwhile things for people don't I? Just because I don't get paid for what I do doesn't mean that what I do isn't valuable to them. After she began to feel more positive about herself she began to consider more seriously how she could reach some of her goals; namely, those of a relationship with a man, a job, and a better place to live.

Ann worked on trying to change the way she was living her life by using the strength of her new self-image. She initially was encouraged mainly from the fact that she was more open and assertive, more confident that she had something to offer to others. What she found was that other people did not want to see her in a new way. They were used to seeing her as incapable and had fixed her into that mold. As she recognized this she became more angry and spoke out about it to them. Often this only made others stay away from her for

awhile as they thought she would get back to her old self if they left her alone. Ann also had problems with her church at this time. She wanted them to accept her as a changing person and instead they wanted her to remain as she was, to do some of the menial tasks she had been doing without complaint or pay. She began to feel used yet at the same time recognized that if she broke off the relationship with this church she would be very lonely. She came back to the counseling sessions questioning why she felt so trapped even after recognizing more of her potential.

It is obvious that part of the problem was how her society was reacting to her and that some of the blame must be due to the "narrowmindedness" or the ignorance of the people around her. This was pointed out, but it was also noted that these people usually did not mean to hinder her but were generally trying to be kind to her even if in reality the actions were not kind. Ann recognized this and observed with some surprise that the society in which we live is characterized by people with problems. Before she had assumed that she was always the problem and that everyone else "had everything straight". This recognition had the effect of increasing her self-esteem on the one hand but also made her recognize that she could not make the changes she felt necessary for herself by herself. She needed the help of other people. Ann recognized at this time that her



own resources were not capable of renewing herself. Even though she had potential, she had trouble using it appropriately. At times she would alienate others through her anger, or by rejection, or by dependence. She wanted help in using her potential.

The theological process which Ann had gone through up to this point can be described as recognizing that she was created in the image of God and then seeing that both she and her society suffered a disability in expressing the proper reflection of that image. Her experience brought her to the same place as the theological study does in the abstract; that is, to a recognition that somehow other help is needed in life in order that we may really be what we, at least in part, envision as possible for ourselves. The question that Ann began to raise was, therefore, where she could find this help in using her potential.

Ann began to question me as to how I ordered my life and how I could develop relationships with other people. She also wondered how I would address some of the issues she faced. At this point I told her that I could tell her what I saw happening to her and what I did in similar situations only if I could use my own framework of describing the events. That meant that I would have to speak about God, Jesus Christ, the church, and other things to which she had earlier said she would not listen. I did say, however, that if she

could use this information in a way that precluded the use of the theological realities she could try to do that since I was not trying to trap her. She agreed to let me describe what was happening in my own terms and decided that she could maybe use the information without using the theological constructs. I explained to her, therefore, how I viewed the image of God, the potential and the fallenness of humanity and the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit and the church. She basically was given the theological structure that has been introduced in chapter one; part of which is more developed in chapter two. As she heard this she saw a correspondence of the theology with her experience. She recognized that she needed some outside help and that there was this help available in the experience of some people. She therefore decided that maybe she could appropriate some of this information in her own way and receive the same kind of benefit. She began to build a framework of her own with which to operate.

Ann decided that she needed to talk to "God" at times like other people. But she would not admit to the existence of a God; therefore, she believed that somehow it was the actions of piety that were alone responsible for helping people who believed in God. To imitate this in her life she designated a favorite tree of hers as "God". She would go and talk to this tree about her problems much as other

people would talk to God. Her initial benefit in this action was that she found that during this time she collected her thoughts and could sort out conflicts in her mind. However, as time progressed she found that her visits to the tree seemed ridiculous "and something that a mental case would do" -- and she did not want to be that.

A kind of turning point came in the therapy when Ann decided that there could, indeed, be a God but that this God could not be the kind of God she had envisioned in her childhood up to the time she began seeing me. She decided that God might be someone who cared about her enough to want to help her instead of threaten her and force her to do the "right things". Making this admission mentally was a big step for Ann and naturally her emotions and actions did not immediately follow this mental admission. After Ann admitted that there was very likely a God, she once more had fears of having to prove herself worthy. As a pastor, and therefore a representative of God for her, I embodied commands to do things to be worthwhile, a conception that she had obtained about pastors in childhood. In order to test whether God really was interested in her outside of what she could do, she began to stop working at her growth and development. My response was that she had indeed been working hard for some time and that everyone needed a break; she deserved a rest and I did not expect any new accomplishments for as long as she was

satisfied with where she "was at". In response Ann began working to show me that she really could keep on progressing. I praised her for her work but continued to tell her that it was not necessary in order for me to accept her. She took a delight in making me happy to see progress when I did not ask or demand it and soon transferred the same feelings toward her concept of God. At this point she began having difficulties with her church.

Part of the problem she experienced in relationship to her church was one which she had earlier seen as a benefit. This was that anyone could come for any reason regardless of what they thought of God. She found that some members wanted to discourage her from believing in a God. While other members said she was just "on a new kick" and still talked to her, many just ignored her. Her experience said to her that she could believe anything so long as she did not have her belief directly affecting her life. Ann was beginning to experience a need for a group in which to relate and experience growth but was still afraid to enter this kind of group.

At this time Ann began to feel good enough to do things that she had never done before. She took trips in her car which before had left her paralyzed with anxiety. She had previously only taken very short trips around town; now she visited relatives and family members that she had not seen for some time. Her reaction was generally

one of amazement when she come back to a counseling session. She thought that these relatives, whom she had formerly thought were problem free, needed to see that God could be a part of their life and would help them too. Up to this time, however, she did not specifically tell this to people and did not feel a need to look at how Jesus Christ might fit into the picture of her developing religion. Part of her reluctance to join a church group, which was theologically the body of Christ, was that she was finding the acknowledgement of God enough stimulus towards growth at the time.

As Ann felt better about herself, she slowly began to expand her circle of friends and to do what they would do for entertainment. In doing this she ran into a problem that made her question the effectiveness of her theology. At a gathering of friends, all men and women approximately her age, the suggestion was made that they all together go into a hottub in the nude. Everyone agreed that this would be exciting, and Ann believed that her liberation from the past was complete enough so that she too decided to join them. The effect was that she came back to the counseling session burdened with guilt and involved in her psychological punishment more than she had been for months. She wondered why God was laying all this guilt on her if he really accepted her. Why could he not accept her and let her do what she wanted?

At this point I was differentiated from God in her mind so completely that my acceptance or rejection of her actions did not matter. She felt the presence of God in her world that did not depend upon my representational overtones as a pastor. As a pastor, however, I was supposed to be more aware of how God operated, and therefore she addressed her questions to me so that I could be a spokesman for God. I approached the issue by discussing whether there was really such a thing as actual guilt that followed active wrongdoing. If there was, then her guilt may have come from a rejection of some of the principles which she had adopted for her life. As we explored her guilt she became aware of attitudes and desires toward other men in the hottub which, if acted upon, would be destructive to her relationship with them, their relationships with their friends, and would destroy the circle of friends that was present. The destructiveness was due to attitudes that saw other people more as objects of gratification, as things rather than human being. Ann began to recognize a basic self-centeredness in herself even though she had not acted out this self-centeredness externally in the hottub incident. She began to see that God also had to be a forgiving God if she was to remain in relationship with him. Once more Ann asked me to explain theologically what she had been going through with her guilt. She no longer opposed my talk of God or religion but rather

was finding it practical enough that she spoke of it and wanted me to speak of it often.

I explained to her that from my understanding of theology she had experienced her feelings of guilt because she had become aware through the hottub experience that she was selfish in many ways and at times desired to use people as things just as she had once been used. From her past experience she knew that this was destructive to persons when in effect their humanity was stripped away from them by someone else. The actions taken or resisted mattered little because the desires indicated what she was like on the inside. Theologically this was a demonstration of the effects of concupiscence (although I did not introduce this term). The recognition of what she really was "on the inside" led her to experience a need for forgiveness with God. The way I found forgiveness with God was through Jesus Christ, and I assumed she would have to look here too.

Ann said at that time that she had thought that she might be able to believe in God and never have to deal with Jesus Christ but that somehow she was being led down a road in that direction. She questioned whether that was necessary or whether there was something she could do other than what I had done. She therefore spent several weeks casting about for another way to deal with her guilt. During this time she would often ask me to explain more of how

Jesus Christ could reconcile her with God. My emphasis was that first of all she had to recognize that he was central to her relationship with God and that she would see the forgiveness by living within the fellowship of the church. After she was assured that this did not mean that she could no longer see her old friends, that she was not expected to be able to change a lifestyle overnight, and that she still did not have a "salvation by works" being introduced, she began to explore the options of joining a church group concerned with the growth of its members. Before she made any decisions about what or who Jesus Christ was, she wanted to see people who operated with Christ as a reality in their lives. This was necessary to allay the fears that she might be getting back into what she remembered from her childhood.

During the course of counseling with Ann it became clear that I would have to leave and would be moving away from the area. Her reaction was predictable and we had to spend some time in our sessions preparing for the separation. Her feelings of rejection, her increased use of "punishment" when she found out I would be leaving, and arrangements for her to see another pastor were all issues we discussed. Although occasionally some latent hostility would surface, for example in the form of missing an appointment where she would meet her new counselor, the transition went much more smoothly than



she had thought possible. She decided not to join a church group until she had established a good relationship with her new counselor.

When Ann and I terminated our time of counseling, I outlined for her the progress I had seen her make and encouraged her by saying that I thought her progress was very remarkable considering the years she had spent in and out of hospitals before she came. Some of the simple physical changes she had made were that she had moved to a nicer apartment by herself, she was taking trips in her car, she had begun to do more volunteer work for various agencies, she had started dressing attractively at times in a conscious effort not to try keep people away from her, she had arranged to have her medication cut back and expected to be taken off it entirely, and she initiated contacts with her friends rather than sitting at home waiting for someone to do something for her. In her growth in self-knowledge she had gained much more self-esteem, she was resolving many of the problems religion had formerly held for her, and she was also able to look at some of her shortcomings and then try to handle them constructively. The latter would have paralyzed her ability when she first came for counseling. The summary of what had occurred in counseling was encouraging to Ann who had not thought of it that specifically before this time. These summaries would have been useful more often. It also re-affirmed her in the directions she was

taking in her life.

After I left the area I had contact with her counselor and asked about Ann. He confirmed her progress in that she was able to deal with some of her sexual problems which she had not been able to handle explicitly earlier and she was once again getting ready to join a group for support as a further step towards her independence.

Ann was a remarkable person, and I regretted not being able to stay with her longer to see the extent of her progress. I presented the case here even though I did not see what I considered to be an important change in her counseling, that being her inclusion into a growth group representing for her the body of Christ and a subsequent personal relationship to Christ. Ann's case is remarkable in that she progressed so far after years of being hospitalized and under continual medication. Her previous therapists had reported that she would very likely never be able to live without continued therapy; however, after nearly eight months of counseling together, she was being evaluated for the possibility of being taken off of her medication entirely and she, herself, was seeing the possibility of the cessation of one-to-one counseling after she was established in a support group.

My actual counseling with Ann indicated to me that the general outline of how she was coming to see humanity's relationship to God

was more important to her than the techniques of counseling which were used. This particular aspect of the counseling process, therefore, has been emphasized. During the actual counseling sessions, however, I used a variety of techniques that helped her insight. At times we used free association or spoke of the id, ego, and superego. Later we modified this and used some of the transactional analysis method and terminology. Often we would use Gestalt techniques. But in all of these techniques used and the methodology introduced, we would together analyze what the actual effects were in her life. In this sense the therapy was very cognitively oriented while not neglecting the emotional component. Because of her many years of previous therapy, Ann was familiar with many of the techniques and schools in psychotherapy. What she was interested in when she saw me was a philosophy for organizing her life and much of the self-knowledge that had been forced from her. This philosophy she found through the theological constructs outlined above. For Ann it was a practical experiencing of the need for an integration of the theological element in life after she had received much of the psychological input. For many "normal" people who experience a more stable environment as they develop, the integration of these two disciplines may not be experientially as important as it was for Ann. Given Ann's reflective capabilities and past experiences, it was mandatory for her.

JOY

I first met Joy in a short-term intensive care unit to which she had been admitted due to situational problems that had led to depression. She was thirty-one years old, had three children, and a dissolving marriage. Her background exhibited a variety of factors that led to her present hospitalization. She and a twin sister were born into a family with three other children. From as early as Joy could remember, she seemed to be the "black sheep" of the family. She was the one who had the wrong friends, she was the one who got into trouble coming in late, she was the one who neglected her school work, and the list continued. Her family had church affiliations with a Presbyterian church but attended very seldom, and Joy never had much interest in this aspect of life. After graduation from high school Joy moved out and lived on her own. She became a waitress and worked her way up to night clubs and high-class restaurants where the pay was excellent in the form of tips. During this time she began to experiment sexually and found that sexual expression during intercourse was "almost intoxicating" for her. She acknowledged that she normally was not as emotionally expressive externally as she felt internally and that possibly the expression during sexual intercourse made up for this lack of emotion at other

times. She also became involved in the use of marijuana and then various prescription drugs, often obtained illegally, during this time. Joy became pregnant when she was twenty-three and did not know who the father was. Although this did not seem to be upsetting to her in retrospect, she did stop having any association with her church because she was "too embarrassed" and did not feel like a part of them. Soon after this, she became involved with a married man, and the relationship lasted through his getting a divorce and then marrying her. They soon had a child together and after about two years she went back to work as a waitress. Her marriage was not going well, and she became an "easy pick-up". After work she would have sexual encounters with various men before she went home. This led to a third pregnancy at the time and another child whose father was unknown. By this time her family was rejecting her, her husband had little interest in the marriage and was seeing another woman, and Joy began to have fears about the destructiveness of her lifestyle. When the third child was old enough she went back to work resolving to "keep it clean". It was only a few weeks, however, before she once more found herself in the backseat of a car after work with a man she did not know. At about the same time, her husband moved out to live with his girlfriend. These events coupled with dependency on her prescription drugs led her to seek help.

Joy was admitted to a unit where she saw both a psychologist and myself. She also belonged to a group of patients which supported each other and experienced therapeutic interaction through psychodrama, group therapy, and various encounter classes of which I was often a part but which were principally led by a woman trained specifically in this type of work. This woman functioned as a role-model for Joy in a way that the male psychologist and myself could not. The combination of therapeutic involvements seemed to be one of the most effective that Joy could have been given.

The initial feelings that Joy had in relation to me as a pastor were those of fear of rejection for what she was like. She could more easily relate to other people not associated with the church in her mind because she had less fears of rejection from them. My initial goal, then, was to help her see that I could accept her as a person even if I believed, as she did, that her past actions had been destructive. As Joy despaired over the "mess" she had made of life, I shared her sorrow but then went beyond it and also held out a hope borne out of my belief in her potential. Joy saw that she had potential but believed that she had destroyed any capacity to use it effectively because of her past. In effect, she did not see how she could really be forgiven, or forgive herself, for what she was and had done. An intellectual awareness of her state in forgiveness was

being vetoed by her feelings. Her intellectual theology was not able to be a working theology for her. Part of the reason that she was seeing others as so much better than she was seeing herself was because they "had their lives together" as she understood this phrase. I, therefore, began to identify with her by revealing the lack of "togetherness" in parts of my own life. The initial step in this process was to look at what sin was.

As we looked at sin, I once more considered the concept of concupiscence. If sin is sin no matter at what level, then all of us are caught in the same experience of sin through the imaginations of our minds. While it might have been true that I was not involved in as many socially unacceptable sins as Joy had been, yet I was just as guilty before God, which was a more primary concern. The cost of my forgiveness was the same as hers. As Joy became aware that interiorly I certainly shared the pollution of sin with her, she was able to begin to believe that she was also salvagable. She still was concerned, however, about how her past life would affect her future. In addressing this issue we spoke of other people whose lives had been transformed. In most of these cases the past lives could be used either as a benefit for the purpose of instructing and encouraging others or it could be hidden. To hide one's life created a constant fear of discovery; to use it positively generally had the effect of

people forgetting the past and concentrating more on the present. The past lost its significance after awhile as the creative work of a person overshadowed the past. Yet it was this very past that was used to encourage the creativity. What Joy was learning was that God could use even the negative parts of her life for good and that these could be used because she was a mirror of God's image.

During the time period in which Joy and I discussed the above issues she also was becoming more open emotionally through the work with her other counselors. She also was learning the benefits of being able to share her life with other members of her group and experience their acceptance. This experience of acceptance of her own emotions and acceptance by others had the effect of confirming our conversations about her basic value that lay outside of her actions. As Joy began to operate outside of the framework of depression with which she had come, she began to make responsible decisions for her life within the protected framework of the hospital. This naturally led to her discharge and care was received as an outpatient from the psychologist. The progress of Joy and her capacity to leave her old life-style, however, was not complete. She had learned that she was someone of value but she still was to find that this did not necessarily solve her problems of guiding her life.

When Joy left the hospital she had another former patient move



in with her as a babysitter. She also retained a circle of friends which were involved in using various kinds of drugs. When she left I referred her to a church at which I expected she would be warmly received and would very soon feel at home. Unfortunately, Joy did not follow this recommendation. As she later expressed her feelings, she said that she believed that she could make it on her own and stay out of the kinds of things her friends were involved in while still associating with them.

In her follow-up care at this time I learned from Joy's psychologist that she was having problems with her live-in babysitter and also with her friends. Occasionally I would see Joy, and she would report to me how "things were going pretty well, but that she had some issues to straighten out." She was still convinced that she could make it on her own and was not interested in looking at her life through religious spectacles. This feeling I honored although I remained in touch with her. About four months after her discharge I saw her in church one Sunday morning. Knowing this was unusual, I suspected that Joy was feeling the need for some changes in her life. She left after the service before talking to me, later confirming that she had avoided me. She contacted me a week later and said that she was seeing the pastor of the church for counseling in order to learn more about this particular church and what Christianity really offered.

A trouble she was having in her mind was that she was a hypocrite sitting there with all of those good people. "If they knew what I was really like and the things I had done no one would talk to me." In re-assurance I told her that one of the members she would undoubtedly meet had been a heroin addict for a number of years before coming to this church. There were also a few former prostitutes and several ex-convicts. I would not tell her who these people were, and of course they would not know about her unless she told them. The reality of sitting in church is that everyone looks like they are good people (and in God's sight, through Christ, they may be) but we all need help in our lives to put these problems in the past. The help will come as we recognize the power of Jesus Christ and its availability through his body, the church. Naturally Joy found it hard to believe that there were people with similar backgrounds to hers in the church, but she was encouraged to get to know people who were like her. Given her improved abilities to relate to others she soon was a vital member of the church and found tremendous support from people in the church. She also joined several groups within the church for support at this time and found this very helpful for her in establishing a new and constructive life-style.

As Joy became aware of the real meaning and potential that Christianity gave her life, some of the more dramatic changes occurred

in her life. First, her psychologist became aware that she no longer needed the support he was giving her and asked me about the support she had found in her church. After checking with me about the reliability of the church, he terminated counseling with her. Secondly, with the support of seeing the church pastor, Joy broke some of the destructive patterns of her life. She found a job that allowed her more time with her children and took her out of an atmosphere that she found contributed to her behavioral problems. She began to relate responsibly to her husband and while being willing to try and re-establish a healthy marriage made it clear that he would have to live up to his responsibilities in a relationship. When he divorced her, she gave herself time to develop a healthy relationship and did not use sex as before. Third, when Joy did have a problem with finances or another aspect of life, she found help of the kind she needed and did not try to be all-sufficient. Fourth, she began to demonstrate a productive and helpful relationship with other women to whom the church was ministering who had problems similar to those in Joy's past.

Some specifics about Joy's involvement with this church will be instructive. One of the ways in which Joy made a major contribution while also experiencing the support of the church was by becoming involved in sharing the ministry of Christ's love with women on work-

release status from the state penitentiary who lived in a house owned and operated by the church. This house had a family living in it who would take in five women from the penitentiary six months before they were eligible for parole. The church would then support these women financially while they searched for a job and then charge them a minimal rental fee to both encourage responsibility and let them begin to save money in order to make a new start for themselves when they left the house. It was the women that lived in this house that became a focus for some of Joy's ministry. She identified with them in many ways and knew from her own experience that there was a way open to liberation that went beyond just freeing oneself from the bonds of the law and economic pressures. Joy would help these women look for jobs, would take them to her house for dinners, would go to church functions with them, and generally would make them feel accepted. In return the church reinforced this ministry of Joy by giving her the financial support she needed to undertake some of the projects she did with these women, by inviting and encouraging her and these women to various group outings and church functions, by giving her an opportunity occasionally to tell the church of the changes she was seeing in her life as well as in the lives of the women with whom she was working, and by accepting her as a valuable working member of the body of Christ who was in many ways expressing her gratitude to

God in more visible ways than many of the church members.

In a very short time it became evident that Joy was in touch with many of the joys and sorrows of people in the church community since she actively sought out ways to be of service. The church, therefore, gave her the opportunity to share this information by having her write a column introducing different members of the church community to other church members. In effect, this not only helped the church community draw closer together in a communion but also let the church body as a whole see the redeemed character of Joy more clearly. Joy was using her background as a strength in order to minister to others and in the process her background was becoming nothing more than a forgotten background because of the benefits of her present actions to the church. Joy herself was feeling an acceptance that was not dependent upon her work and was becoming much more "other-oriented" in her actions.

Although the picture of Joy's recovered health is bright, one must not suppose that all of her problems were resolved or that she did not have differences of opinion with the church over its' style of ministry. All Christians, Joy and the church included, are in the process of sanctification, a process of becoming the pure bride of Christ that can be presented to God without spot or wrinkle. There were, therefore, wrinkles in the relationship between Joy and the

church that had to be ironed out just as there are wrinkles in any relationship. The difference, however, between the wrinkles of Joy's relationship with the church and the wrinkles of her previous life is significant. In the relationship with the church the wrinkles were approached in love and parties tried to understand the position of the other and not only insist on one's own rights. The attitude of forgiveness to each other because of the experienced forgiveness of Christ was present and allowed Joy to experience disagreements in a context of acceptance rather than rejection.

Although Joy experienced much more support and growth in the context of her church, this did not make her overly dependent. Rather, it strengthened her character to such a degree that when she found that she actually was beginning to depend upon the advice of certain people too much and therefore stunting her own continued growth and development in the Christian life, she considered whether it was advisable for her to find another church in which she could make a contribution and continue her growth. This decision appealed to her because a new start would enable her to proceed in developing new styles of ministry other than the ones which she had already developed. The move also seemed advantageous because she could join a church in her community and be more active in neighborhood projects where she lived. In effect, the outside mission orientation of the church univer-

sal became more important to her.

In some ways Joy's transfer to another church can be seen as a means of escape from any problems she may have had. Her involvement in her church, however, has been seen to be largely free of the serious problems which she had in her previous lifestyle. When Joy left, it was difficult for some church members to understand but, in effect, it was a way of Joy stating that she had now "arrived". She was healed and could go forth in the strength of Christ and "sin no more".

There is an overall progress in Joy's recovery toward a productive life that is similar to that experienced in Ann's life. This pattern is first of all a recognition that one is of value and has potential due to the fact of being a reflection of the image of God. Secondly, the mere acknowledgement of potential is not effective unless it is transformed and supported by the work of Jesus Christ through the body of the church. This recognition may come as one experiences the incapacity to use the potential. Third, the freedom to use one's potential when liberated is experienced as something that cannot be squelched.

In Joy's case the recognition of being created in the image of God came when she was originally in the hospital. This tremendously encouraged her and helped her get out of her depression. However, she decided to use this potential on her own with the help of psycholo-

gical insight but not spiritual insight. She then experienced the paralysis of the fallenness of humanity. Although she said she psychologically understood why she did what she did, she still did not seem to have the power to stop. This made her recognize a need for help and therefore she went to church. After seeing me there and recalling some of our past conversations, she decided to speak with the pastor. She came in contact with the strength of Christ through the church and the fellowship available among Christians. This enabled her to make the changes she wanted in life. Subsequently, she felt the need to be of service to others also.

Joy demonstrates, as did Ann, that psychological counseling alone is not sufficient for some people. It is of value in helping them to see why they do certain actions; it is useful in finding alternatives to these actions; it can be supportive as transitions are attempted; but, it cannot provide the power needed to effect change since one individual does not contain the necessary internal power for the great changes needed in life. To make the great and necessary changes in life requires the input of theology conceptually ("how shall they hear without a preacher") and the input of the Spirit and church experientially. Only when Joy and Ann used the input of the church were they able to confront their problems on a level that enabled them to use their psychological insight most effectively.



## CONCLUSIONS FROM CASE STUDIES

It is evident that the procedures used in the above cases address the more general issue of the context of counseling rather than specific methodologies and techniques. Psychological, sociological, and psychiatric intervention very likely do not exhibit their maximum effectiveness unless the recipient has a theological framework within which to interpret the data received from methods of therapy. It becomes crucial in all cases of counseling, therefore, to examine the spiritual awareness of the client in order that the methods used to help them in their insight may be effective. An initial way to determine the likelihood of an integrated theological system for dealing with counseling is to observe the patterns of life which a person brings to the counseling situation. If a person has significant relationships of support and encouragement it is likely that they can deal with the insights that counseling may give.<sup>1</sup> If they do not demonstrate any relationships of support it is very likely that they may lack the theological and spiritual framework with which to deal with the insights of counseling methodologies. In these cases it is necessary to first of all to lead a person to involvement with Christ and his church so that

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<sup>1</sup>A. McGinnis, The Friendship Factor (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979) 10.

they will be put in touch with their own lives and the reality of the spiritual aspects of life. These growth groups provide a means to meet some of the practical issues which were seen as troubling by personality theorists like Maslow who called for their integration into the arts of healing the soul.

A few guidelines may be given here in addressing the issue of the differences growth groups that have a conscious relationship to faith have from groups that seek no relationship to the resources of faith. The spiritual resources of faith are central to the most effective growth as is recognized by Clinebell. He cites a main reason for writing about growth counseling:

This book attempts to fulfill my hopes to the degree that it: . . . -- makes you more aware that spiritual growth is central in all human growth and is therefore an essential part of your task as a counselor and therapist.<sup>2</sup>

The use of spiritual resources in a growth group establishes the accepting character of the group upon the epistemological commitment of a person being created in the image of God. Therefore the acceptance of a growth group in touch with spiritual values has a depth dimension to it not as readily available to a group not in touch with these values, although both groups have a common concern of

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<sup>2</sup>H. Clinebell, Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979)  
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enhancing the growth and capacities for acceptance in group members. As the growth group in touch with spiritual resources continues to develop the members may also experience the life-changing presence and strength of the Holy Spirit in a way not recognized by a group not acknowledging the spiritual. Throughout the life of the growth group the spiritual dimension can add experiences and insights that are not available otherwise.

The church-related growth group actually becomes an expression of church life itself. It provides concrete structure to fellowship which is so important to many people (such as Joy in the above case study). In this sense there is a real parallel to the function of the church. The church, however, goes beyond the growth group in a more systematic expounding of the Word, a more organized means of celebrating the faith, a better organized means for providing social and economic care for the needy, and a better organized evangelistic outreach. This is not to say that the growth group does not provide any of these aspects of church life but that these aspects are addressed more adequately in other ways.

The programs and existence of a "church" (the building and formal recognition by a denomination) may continue even though the membership is no longer involved in the life of the church (the body of believers in Christ). Here the church must recognize the responsi-

bility to begin at a basic level of fellowship in its ministry to its members. Ann, in the case studied, had experienced a lack of fellowship in the "church" and was afraid to go back and look for it in the church once more. She would rather have the buffer of a specifically organized group experience first of all. Joy, providentially, joined a church where the expression of fellowship was very alive and therefore could continue the process of growth and become more involved in the many different aspects of church life. What is pointed out by these examples is that the church has a real responsibility to provide for the growth of its members by pointing to Christ and that a real tool can begin this growth is the use of fellowship groups. Once people become desirous of growing in their faith and relationships they may outstrip their limited use of a growth group and proceed at their own, more rapid rate. At the same time, they will become more productive members of the church in the same way that Joy was in the case presented in this chapter.

## Chapter VI

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has emphasized the need for a unifying theological framework for counseling that is salugenic both for individuals and society. This emphasis builds upon the recognition of many psychotherapists that counseling must be more than just an alleviation of the pathological. The framework for a salugenic model of counseling is not satisfactorily derived from former pathological models. From the discipline of psychology we have seen a need expressed for the input of theology. In some cases psychologists have tried to develop theology with psychological tools in order to address issues where theologians apparently did not speak or were not being heard. This study, therefore, addressed the need for a word from theology to counseling using theological constructs that related to issues faced by psychologists.

The primary theological position used was that of John Calvin whose theology had a broad influence in western society. The issues of freedom especially have a background in Calvin's theology. "The freedom still enjoyed in Western civilization derives from the Christian faith. It was especially Calvinism that became the taproot of

our present freedom."<sup>1</sup> Calvin's system of theology also is a classical system as Oden defines this term. As such, it meets a modern demand for a new look at classical theology and how it may contribute to theology's address to modern issues.

Calvin's anthropology was identified as a primary focus for study in relationship to counseling issues. Here we saw the image of God being used as a primary reason for acceptance of all humanity. The reality of fallenness was seen when people looked into themselves and found that they had problems, lacked an incentive for growth at times, were often actively resistant to caring for themselves and others, and many times were little concerned about any place in life for their Creator. Yet, the hope and despair present from seeing the image of God and recognizing the fallenness can work together to bring a person to a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ and his body, the church. This, of course, occurs in conjunction with the Holy Spirit who "makes men natural."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin's theology was given new directions by considering some critiques which have been made of his thought and ministry. First, Calvin's understanding of freedom and authority were considered

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<sup>1</sup>A. Kuyvenhoven, "Liberty", Banner (July 6, 1981).

<sup>2</sup>R. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959) 192.

through the eyes of Erich Fromm. Here we saw that Calvin's theology has been and is often used as a tool in life which leads to an escape from freedom. Calvin would rather have desired his thought to point one toward the reality of God and the resources found there. Fromm also pointed out clearly that the tools of psychoanalysis<sup>3</sup> cannot be used as a substitute for theology. When this happens, a psychoanalytic position can create a loss of freedom just as any theological system might. Second, Calvin's understanding of pride was considered. Here we find that Calvin believed that ". . . pride was the beginning of all evils, and that by pride the human race was ruined."<sup>4</sup> While this may be true theologically, the contribution of psychoanalysis has shown that pride may function as a preserving crutch for some people and also that the appearance of pride may actually be a cover for a sense of low self-esteem. These findings help the theologian understand more clearly the differences of the function of pride in people who recognize themselves as created beings with a dependence on God and those who have no such orientation. Pride may still be labelled as sin; but even sinful actions can contribute to God's glory in Calvin's

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<sup>3</sup>By "tools of psychoanalysis" we means not only techniques like free association, dream analysis, and hypnotism, but also the approach of learning of God through reason without the assistance of His revelation.

<sup>4</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 152, 3:6.

thought and, therefore, these new findings concerning pride function as a stimulus in the development of a pastoral theology building upon Calvin's theology. Third, the woman's movement by implication has pointed out lacunas in Calvin's exegetical work. Several primary scripture passages, particularly those in Genesis, have not been exegeted by Calvin with a specific concern for how they speak of women. Yet it is in this exegesis that the woman's movement may find the strength of historical Christian theology for themselves. Calvin, like Oden, would ask for feminists to "Spend your best intellectual energies in solid exegesis of scripture, and with those historic church teachers whose passion was the proper grasping of the word of scripture. . . ."<sup>5</sup> The exegetical base which Calvin has provided is a base of strength from which to begin.

The case studies in the preceding chapter show how a theological framework, such as Calvin's theology provides, may be conducive to growth in counseling situations. Here we also saw that the ideal means of counseling in the Christian community is to use, or have the goal of using, the members of the church as a pastoral resource. As people recognize their common humanity as created beings in the image of God, they then become more free to look at themselves and

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<sup>5</sup>T. Oden, Agenda for Theology (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) 69.



consider their personal needs for growth in life. When then trying to grow in community, people begin to experience the reality of Christ.

There are five specific conclusions which can be drawn from this study that relate both to a contemporary understanding of Calvin and also to the actual practice of pastoral counseling. Each of these conclusions is based theoretically upon the study done in the previous chapters and still would need further study with research and controls in order to be empirically verified. Nevertheless, these conclusions can shape studies which will follow this one; therefore, these conclusions are valuable if viewed germinally. The conclusions themselves point to implications that also may be of value but which have not been researched in this study. The implications of each conclusion will be presented since they indicate the need for further study of both a theoretical and subsequently an empirical nature. Since the implications also need theoretical support they cannot function as conclusions from this study.

The first conclusion that may be drawn from this study is that Calvin's pastoral care was influenced by his concept of the image of God. The theological contribution of Calvin to pastoral counseling is that people must be accepted initially purely upon the basis of the created image of God and learn to accept themselves in the same manner. Acceptance of the image of God by the counselor is a starting-

point that foreshadows new growth in a person. ". . . the imago dei must be understood teleologically and eschatologically, for it is only shadowed forth in man until he reaches perfection. Imago dei is thus man's destiny in God's gracious intention. It is the original truth of his being which is also future."<sup>6</sup> The counselor can envision new growth, but the counselee must experience the starting-point. "Again, it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself."<sup>7</sup> To look upon God's face is to recognize that the imprint of God is upon oneself. This invests a person with value and potential and gives a basis for self-acceptance. It meets a basic personal need of a person ". . . to regard himself as a worthwhile human being."<sup>8</sup>

The aspect of the image that functioned with the most importance practically for Calvin was that of rectitude. The challenge for Calvin, as it can be for us, was to bring people past the recognition of the values and capacities of the image of God to a desire to develop these

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<sup>6</sup>T. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952) 61.

<sup>7</sup>J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967) 37 (I, 1, 2)

<sup>8</sup>L. Crabb, Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 53.

gifts. This does not readily happen in all instances. In more modern times the same problem has been described by way of analogy by C.S. Lewis.

Did you ever think, when you were a child, what fun it would be if your toys could come to life? Well suppose you could really have brought them to life. Imagine turning a tin soldier into a real little man. It would involve turning the tin into flesh. And suppose the tin soldier did not like it. He is not interested in flesh; all he sees is that the tin is being spoilt. He thinks you are killing him. He will do everything he can to prevent you. He will not be made into a man if he can help it.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, some people are afraid of growth and may feel that to become "natural" through the restoring of the image of God is really killing their individuality. This is not the correct perspective. The image of God allows each person a uniqueness by allowing one to be oneself as created rather than having to conform to a social expectation. This must be remembered so that rectitude does not become a concept used to cast everyone into similar molds. There may be a temptation on the part of the counselor to press on the importance of rectitude and forget that value lies first of all in pure acceptance of the image of God even if in defaced form. If the image of God is seen at all, the desire for change should follow. That desire should not be forced by the manipulations of the counselor. Here the pastoral counselor depends

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<sup>9</sup>C. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1943) 154-155.

on the work of the Spirit of God.

Calvin's consideration of the image of God and his use of rectitude points to two implications for the counselor. First, the image of God, seen as capacity of a state of being, is more important initially than the aspect of rectitude. In other words, a person is accepted for what he or she is and not for what that person has been or will be. Secondly, rectitude as an aspect of the image is important once the initial value of a person in relationship to God is seen. Even in initial stages of counseling, therefore, rectitude should function in the framework of gratitude.

The second conclusion drawn from this study is that Calvin may have focused too intensely in his actual ministry on the concept of rectitude in some situations. Granted that his age called for the use of rectitude in greater measure than ours might, it still has been shown that he became very impatient at times and then order seemed to become more important than people. The occasional lack of balance between order and individual people created problems for those to whom Calvin ministered.

What often happened in practice was that the human solidarity which men have in Christ, and which is expressed in the church, was defended and pursued in such a manner that the rights of the individual in Geneva were ignored. . . . sometimes privacy was violated, the weak were browbeaten and at times physically beaten, and brutality was promoted and condoned in the name of religious and civil harmony. The tension between society and the individual

is always likely to tip; in Geneva it sometimes tipped over and distributed horror on the individual.<sup>10</sup>

Justice is not done, however, if we fail to recognize that Calvin was also very much concerned about human solidarity and mutual support. He lived in a culture in which the rule of the majority characteristically imposed itself upon the minority. In Geneva, the severity of regulations was a characteristic in which Calvin lived rather than generated.

In the confusions of the years 1538-1541, with Calvin absent [emphasis mine], the authorities had adopted a severe course. They had forced compliance with the new beliefs and practices on pain of exile and had visited the homes in order to destroy images. The councils were inclined to be oppressive through anxiety. The severity of the regime after 1541 is also much more connected with the councils than with the Consistory.<sup>11</sup>

In light of these facts, it may be appropriate to envision Calvin as a tempering influence in Geneva rather than the imposing theocratic dictator. Nevertheless, as a man of his times, Calvin also demonstrated an intolerance upon occasion just as his society. At these times he may have misdirected some of the emphases in his theology, and this can be instructive for us as pastors and counselors of the twentieth-century church. We must recognize the need for order in

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<sup>10</sup>W. Graham, The Constructive Revolutionary (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971) 165.

<sup>11</sup>J. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) 164.

our society but must remember that we may not force an order upon a person who refuses to accept the construct. We must function as salt and yeast in society and not merely as overseers. In counseling this means the pastor must recognize a dependency upon the Spirit of God to bring about a change in a person so that he or she will desire to renew an order in life, to become natural, or to grow. As many counselors have discovered, the recognition of a problem does not automatically lead a person to make necessary changes in life. Perhaps the most important recognition in life is pointed out by C.S. Lewis as a common one which, when seen, people then do not use positively. Lewis wrote,

These, then, are the two points I have wanted to make. First, that humanbeings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.<sup>12</sup>

To Calvin, the above two points were so obvious that he could hardly conceive of people not living with these points clearly before them. The fact that many people did not affected their relationship with Calvin. As just seen, the City Council of Geneva demanded order and respect of the laws and Calvin supported the Council in this stance.

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<sup>12</sup> Lewis, 21.

He believed, as stated in Romans 13, that there was no authority except from God and therefore the authority was to be respected.<sup>13</sup> Law and order, he believed, was for the purpose of helping people live the kind of life they knew they should, but with which they nevertheless had difficulty.

The order of God should also be reflected in the developing Christian community. Both men and women had their places in the social, political, and economic systems as well as in relationship to their families. The order that Calvin saw in a marriage is summarized by Bieler.

By giving them back their humanness, Christ makes it possible that man and woman find themselves again face to face. Only the daily intervention of Christ can restore the couple which by nature is divided. And Christ eliminates man's tendencies to consider woman as inferior. In Christ there is no longer man or woman.

"There is no distinction between male and female," says Calvin. "With regard to the Kingdom of God, which is spiritual," he adds, "There is no difference between man and woman."<sup>14</sup>

When people in Geneva disagreed with this clear scriptural principle, as Calvin saw it, then conflicts arose. This was seen in chapter four where it was noted how Calvin demanded equal morality standards for

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<sup>13</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 281, 13:1-2.

<sup>14</sup>A. Bieler, The Social Humanism of Calvin (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964) 20.

men and women, standards which had previously been more oppressive to women.

The order necessary in the marriage was also to be demonstrated in the rest of society as well. "Communion in Jesus Christ abolishes or surmounts all sociological divisions which separate human beings and destroy the harmonious life of society."<sup>15</sup> The order was not only to be seen among Christians but among all members of society. When people lived outside of this order in Geneva, therefore, the result was often a strained relationship with the church and also with Calvin.

In our society we should strive to make the message of rectitude one of liberation rather than one of bondage. The way this is to be done within the framework of Calvin's thought has been pointed to in this study. First of all, the orderly response to the law of God should be encouraged as an individual response through gratitude, hopefully based upon Christ's work, as much as possible. This recognizes that laws must be made for the safety and protection of society which are also demonstrative of God's order; however, individual belief and morality, insofar as it does not affect other people, should be a matter of personal choice. There may be difficulty with

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 20-21.



where to draw the line between individual freedom here and social responsibility; however, this is a difficulty that must be faced in a study dedicated to this problem. The second implication is that the social order between men and women must be seen in the context of a careful study of Genesis, which Calvin could not have critically exegeted in the sixteenth-century in the light of contemporary biblical scholarship or feminist issues. Calvin used the concept of rectitude in his practical work to such an extent that he apparently assumed the construct in some of his exegetical work without adequately demonstrating it. Using Calvin's lead in critical exegetical study may help us restore a practical balance to his concepts of the created image of God and how it is related to rectitude.

The third conclusion to be drawn from this study is that the created image concept in pastoral counseling is a valuable tool for the pastor working with both church and non-church members. Particularly when studying Calvin's theology, we saw his references to human beings as vermin and other derogatory imagery which modern people have remembered while forgetting his sense of the image of God. In contrast to this it is valuable for people both in the church and out of it to hear that they are indeed valuable in their just being. Pastoral counseling has a place in meeting the needs of those who are not interested in the church as shown by the case studies in chapter five. The message of acceptance is needed by those outside of the church as well

as those within the church. The message of judgment, if it must be given, will come later when the context of grace has been established. The reason why the use of the concept of the created image of God being in a person is valuable rests upon observation of the case studies and logical conclusion from Calvin's theology; but the implication of this observation can be tested more empirically. The implication is that the concept of the image communicates value to a person. This implication has been assumed and almost certainly would prove to be true; nevertheless, it is possible that the created image concept is valuable in counseling for some other reason which testing might bring forth.

A second implication relating to the above conclusion is that people can experience acceptance in a growth group that brings them past pathological judgment. Clinebell's development of the growth group concept tends to support this implication as well as the one above of the image of God communicating value. That Calvin himself thought this implications was valid is seen in his development of the grabeau and the consistory where pastoral care was seen as mutual and shared. That modern counseling recognized the need for this emphasis is seen in the contributions of Carl Rogers and his emphasis on acceptance in the counseling process. All of this is important to the pastoral counselor because it indicates that the church is a fellowship

that communicates acceptance and openness to confront problems as led by the Spirit. Attracting people into the growth of the Christian life is more effective than trying to force Christianity upon someone.

A third implication from the value of the created image concept is that it gives the pastoral counselor a preliminary basis from which to delineate and critique the presuppositions of various psychotherapeutic schools or techniques. For example: in a group counseling situation in which a pastor may be a participant; the knowledge of the theological implications of a person being created in the image of God gives the pastor a reference point in observing whether the process used in this particular group affirms every person as a unique person. If so, then one inherent theological assumption in this group may be that every person stands in relationship to God. Furthermore, a pastor may observe whether individual expressions of incapacity and despair are taken seriously. If so, then there is another inherent theological assumption that a fall from the created image is experienced. If either of the aspects of counseling is bypassed, the counseling starts from a position of weakness since it does not take basic theological commitments into account. When these theological contributions to knowledge become a recognized part of the counseling, then the subsequent questions of available hope, growth potential, and reconciliation can be dealt with more constructively. These subsequent issues may continue to be informed by other areas of theology not

discussed in this study (such as Soteriology, Christology, Eschatology, Ecclesiology, etc.). This thological framework does not exclude contributions by various psychological schools and psychological research; rather, it provides a structure into which the contributions of many schools may be organized. Thus, various aspects of different psychological schools can be utilized as they are incorporated into a theological understanding. This recognizes that psychological systems, as all systems, have an implicit theological base from which they are developed or by which they are interpreted. Often these theological bases are not explicit but may be determined from study of the system. Conflicting theological values need not negate the use of valuable techniques or emphases. As an old adage states, "Truth is truth wherever it is found."

The fourth conclusion that can be drawn is related to observations already made. It is that Calvin contributed to the development of pastoral care by developing the idea that pastors and elders minister to each other and also share the responsibilities of care for the congregation. This was seen practically in the example of the transformation of Joy's life in chapter five. Historically, the development of this idea was presented in the Ordonnances ecclesiastiques, or the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of the Church of Geneva, which is a document that has had a wide effect on the history of the Reformed churches in

particular and more indirectly upon other churches.<sup>16</sup> In this document the assertion is made that, "Pastors are to preach the Word, instruct, and admonish, to administer the sacraments, and, with the elders, to make 'fraternal corrections'."<sup>17</sup> "Fraternal correction, or 'admonition', is a favorite expression of Calvin. Based upon such passages as Hebrews 3:13, and occurring often in the Church Fathers, it became an emphasis in the pastoral theology of the Reformers."<sup>18</sup> The elders, with the pastors, were responsible for pastoral care and, although 'fraternal correction' was important, the benefits of the interpersonal relational developments were not forgotten. For in the document, "Other notable features here involved are the discussion of method itself. . . ."<sup>19</sup>

The development of the "order of elders" is significant in that it re-defines relationships within the body of the church. As McNeill notes, "The order of elders (anciens) takes a remarkable place in this constitution. Here we have Calvin's mature provision for a class of lay associates in discipline and the guidance of souls."<sup>20</sup> Recog-

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<sup>16</sup>McNeill, 160-161.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

dition of this class of "lay associates" opens the doors for the recognition by Calvin that the pastor is in need of God's grace and pastoral care from the members just as other members of the flock are in need of this care. Even the process of care or counseling itself must be seen in the framework of God's grace, for it is within this grace that we all live and which we must express to each other.

The fifth conclusion drawn is that theology as the study of God and God's message must be more than a tool if it is to be of value in counseling. It must be a framework which leads one to see God as reality, source and resource in the counseling process.

Various theologies may accomplish this; however, it is certain that Calvin's theology, correctly understood, begins to help us accomplish the task of helping people see God as reality, source, and resource. This is important for the pastoral counselor particularly since people often come looking for the resources of God when they come to the pastor. They come to find God as source and resource when feeling lost and alienated and discover that God has been working within them all along. This can liberate them to go forth and live a new life in new confidence in relationship to Christ once more.

Fromm misunderstood the significance of theology at this level when he critiqued Calvin and therefore his critique began at a level of basic misunderstanding. The level of integration between theology

and psychology is not that of peer to peer; rather, it is more like the integrating of a mature society with a developing society. The mature society of theology, which is composed of many past and present theologians focusing on a central aspect of knowledge from differing perspectives, has the experience, stability, and resources of proven value. The developing society of psychology has the strength of using new perspectives, vitality, and the latest scientific techniques. The weaknesses of the developing society are found in its area of strength; it has a widely diversified number of approaches to the factual knowledge of its' field and it needs a better defined unifying center which means a better definition of humanity. Precisely at this point theology becomes valuable. There must be an interaction between these two societies so that the traditional bonds of one can interact with the younger impetuousness of the other. In this way the experiences, stability, and resources of theology can provide a framework on which the discoveries of psychology can be analyzed, proven, and made more valuable than uninterpreted fact. In the same manner the framework may occasionally be improved by the work of psychology. One of the greatest contributions seen in this study is the rediscovered emphasis of psychology that people are valuable outside of their actions. This forces theology to come to terms once more with the fact that all people are created in the image of God. This

recognition not only calls the church to "beware of being insulting towards people"<sup>21</sup>, but correspondingly calls for the love of God and neighbor as well as enemy. To know one's nature demands the corresponding recognition of the Christian message as it relates to humanity.

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<sup>21</sup>J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of James (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 292, 3:9.



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